

DGuzik 02 Exodus

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Book 2 of Bible Commentary: David Guzik



calibre 1.20.0

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These are the names of the sons of Israel who entered Egypt – each man with his household entered with Jacob: Guzik - Exodus 1:1-22

Exodus 1 - Israel Multiplies in Egypt

A. Israel's affliction in Egypt.

1. (1-6) The twelve sons of Jacob who came into Egypt.

Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt *already*). And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation.

a. **The names of the children of Israel who**

came to Egypt: The first few verses of Exodus reach back some 430 years. The story of the Exodus begins where the Book of Genesis ends: with this large family with a crucial place in God's plan of the ages and their migration to Egypt.

b. **And Joseph died:** Joseph was the remarkable great-grandson of Abraham who saved Egypt from terrible famine because he listened to God's voice speaking through Pharaoh's dream. Because of his wisdom and administration, he was lifted to high and honored office in Egypt - but eventually, **Joseph died** and the status his family enjoyed died with him.

2. (7) The rapid multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt.

But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

a. **The land was filled with them:** Gen.

47:27 says, *So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied*

exceedingly. They did indeed multiply exceedingly over the generations - so that the **land was filled with them**.

b. **Increased abundantly:** This family started with five people back in Haran: Jacob, Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah. It grew into a clan of about 100 people in 50 years (the 100 includes the seventy of Gen. 46:27 and Exo. 1:5 plus a few wives of the sons not mentioned and grandchildren). This represents a growth rate of just over 6% per year. At that rate there would be several million descendants by the time of Exodus, 430 years later.

3. (8-11) Afraid of their growing presence, the Egyptians oppress the Israelites.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people,

"Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; come, let us deal

shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and *so* go up out of the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.

a. **Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we;**

come, let us deal shrewdly with them: The Egyptians were famous - or infamous - for their proud sense of racial superiority towards all other people. It isn't surprising to see them

afraid and discriminating against this strong minority group in their midst, which looked like it would not be a minority very long.

b. **In the event of war:** At the time, the Egyptians feared invasion from the Hittites of the north. If the Hebrews among them joined with the Hittites, it posed a significant threat to their national security.

c. **They built for Pharaoh supply cities:** When the children of Israel were set to slave labor they built many of the great cities and monuments in Egypt - though not the pyramids, which were built much earlier. Since we don't know exactly when this forced labor began, we don't know how long it lasted. Some estimate the slavery lasted 284 years, others 134 years.

4. (12-14) Israel prospers and grows despite the hard bondage of the Egyptians.

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage; in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.

a. **The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew:** This was God's purpose for Israel's time in Egypt. Egypt served as a "mother's womb" for Israel, a place where they rapidly grew from a large clan to a mighty nation.

i. The nation could not grow this way in Canaan, because they was practically impossible to avoid intermarriage with the pagan and wicked inhabitants of Canaan. Egypt was so racist and had such an entrenched system of apartheid that Israel could grow there over several centuries without being assimilated.

ii. This kind of growth in the face of affliction has always been the story of God's people, throughout all ages - the more they are afflicted, the more they grow. As the ancient Christian writer Tertullian said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

b. They made their lives bitter with hard

bondage: Because this was God's purpose, it could not be defeated - even though the

Egyptians tried their best through cruel slavery.

The principle of Isa. 54:17 proved true: *No weapon formed against you shall prosper*. The wickedness of the Egyptians could *hurt* the children of Israel, but could never *defeat* God's plan for them.

i. In the midst of their cruel and harsh service, life must have seemed hopeless to the children of Israel, and the idea that God was working out His plan must have seemed very far away - yet it was true nonetheless.

B. The Hebrew midwives obey God.

1. (15-16) The king of Egypt tries to destroy Israel by ordering the death of all male babies.

Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one *was*

Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and

he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools, if it *is* a son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live."

a. Of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah: We

shouldn't expect that these two women were the only midwives for all the children of Israel.

They were probably the "presidents" of the "association of midwives."

b. **If it is a son, then you shall kill him:** The king of Egypt commanded them to kill all the male babies, to utterly weaken and practically destroy the people of Israel within a generation.

2. (17) The midwives bravely obey God rather than men. But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.

a. **But the midwives feared God:** This was a case when the choice was clear. The civil government commanded something that was clearly against God's command. The midwives did the only right thing: they obeyed God rather than man.

b. **Saved the male children alive:** They acted on the same principle as did the persecuted apostles in Act. 4:19, when Peter asked the civil authorities: *Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.*

i. Though generally we are called to obey the government and honor civic rulers (Rom. 13:1-5), we are never called to put government in the place of God. Therefore if the government tells us to do something against God's will, we are to obey God first.

3. (18-22) God blesses the efforts of the midwives.

So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?" And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively and give birth before the midwives come to them." Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them. So Pharaoh commanded all his people,

saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

a. Because the Hebrew women are not like

the Egyptian women: Many people assume that the Hebrew midwives lied to Pharaoh when they said this. However, this may not be the case. The midwives may have told the truth, - perhaps indeed the **Hebrew women** were heartier than the Egyptian women, yet the midwives did not explain *all* the reasons why the babies were spared.

i. "This might be no lie, as many suppose, but a truth concerning many of them, and they do not affirm it to be so with all . . . So here was nothing but truth, though they did not speak the whole truth, which they were not obliged to do." (Poole)

b. Therefore God dealt well with the

midwives: Even if they midwives deceived Pharaoh, that was not what God blessed; He blessed their godly bravery in obeying God before man.

c. The people multiplied and grew very

mightily: The worse the persecution against God's plan to multiply the children of Israel in Egypt, the more God made sure the plan succeeded.

i. We may see the command of Pharaoh as consistent with Satan's plan of anti-Semitism through the centuries, as an attack against God's Messiah and ultimate plan for Israel in His plan of redemption. Satan knew that the Messiah - the Seed of the Woman, the One who would crush his head (Gen. 3:15) - would come from the children of Israel. Therefore he tried to destroy the whole

nation in one generation by ordering all the male children killed.

d. **He provided households for them:** This was God's blessing on the midwives - He enabled them to have children of their own. Usually, midwives held their occupation because they had no children of their own.

e. **Every son who is born you shall cast into the river:** Seeing that his plan is not working, Pharaoh makes a far more radical command, that *all* male children should be killed - even Egyptian boys (**Pharaoh commanded all his people**).

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2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, **3** Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, **4** Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. **5** All the people who were directly descended from Jacob numbered seventy. But Joseph was already in Egypt, **6** and in time Joseph and his brothers and all that generation died. **7** The Israelites, however, were fruitful, increased greatly, multiplied, and became extremely strong, so that the land was filled with them.

8 Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power over Egypt. **9** He said to his people, "Look at the Israelite people, more numerous and stronger than we are! **10** Come, let's deal wisely with them. Otherwise they will continue to multiply, and if a war breaks out, they will ally themselves with our enemies and fight against us and leave the country."

11 So they put foremen over the Israelites to oppress them with hard labor. As a result they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. **12** But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread. As a result the Egyptians loathed the Israelites, **13**

and they made the Israelites serve rigorously. **14** They made their lives bitter by hard service with mortar and bricks and by all kinds of service in the fields. Every kind of service the Israelites were required to give was rigorous.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, **16**

“When you assist the Hebrew women in childbirth, observe at the delivery: If it is a son, kill him, but if it is a daughter, she may live.” **17** But the midwives feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.

18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this and let the boys live?” **19** The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women – for the Hebrew women are vigorous; they give birth before the midwife gets to them!” **20** So God treated the midwives well, and the people multiplied and became very strong.

21 And because the midwives feared God, he made households for them.

22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “All sons that are born you must throw into the river, but all daughters you may let live.”

1 A man from the household of Levi married a woman who was a descendant of Levi.

Guzik - Exodus 2:1-25

Exodus 2 - Moses' Birth and Early Career

A. Moses' birth and childhood.

1. (1-2) Moses is born - a beautiful child, of the tribe of Levi. And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child*, she hid him three months.

a. **So the woman conceived and bore a**

son: The baby Moses opened his eyes to an unfriendly world. He was born in a superpower

of a nation, but was of an alien, oppressed race during a time when all babies such as himself were under a royal death sentence.

Nevertheless, Moses had something special in his favor: he was the child of believing parents.

b. A man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi: Exo. 6:20

tells us the names of Moses' parents: *Amram* and *Jochebed*. Jewish legends say that Moses'

birth was painless to his mother, that at his birth his face was so beautiful that the room was filled with light equal to the sun and moon combined, that he walked and spoke when he was a day old, and that he refused to nurse, eating solid food from birth.

c. She hid him three months: The parents of Moses did not do this only because of the natural maternal instinct; they did it also out of faith in God. Heb. 11:23 describes the faith of Moses' parents: *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.*

2. (3-10) Pharaoh's daughter finds Moses.

But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she had opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give *you* your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying,

"Because I drew him out of the water."

a. **Laid it in the reeds by the river's bank:** In a literal sense, Moses' mother did *exactly* what Pharaoh said to do: put her son into the river (Exo. 1:22). However, she took care to put him in a waterproofed basket and strategically floated him in the river.

i. But more so, this is a great example of trusting the child's welfare and future to God alone. When Moses' mother let go of that ark made of bulrushes, she was giving up something precious, trusting that God would take care of it, and perhaps find a way to give it back to her.

b. **So she had compassion on him:** In God's providence, Pharaoh's daughter finds baby Moses, and then hires Moses' own mother to take care of him. Not only does Moses' mother get to still be with her child, now she gets *paid* for it.

i. God greatly rewarded the faith of Moses' mother, both as she trusted Him as she hid Moses for three months, and as she trusted Him by setting Moses out on the river.

c. **And he became her son:** Being the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was in the royal family. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus says Moses was heir to the throne of

Egypt and that while a young man, Moses lead the armies of Egypt in victorious battle against the Ethiopians.

i. Certainly, he was raised with both the science and learning of Egypt. Act. 7:22

says, *Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.* Egypt was one of the most academic and scientific societies on the earth at that time. It is reasonable to think that Moses was instructed in geography, history, grammar, writing, literature, philosophy, and music.

ii. Since he was of the royal family, we expect that as Moses went anywhere, he went in a princely chariot and his guards cried out "bow the knee!" If he floated on the Nile, it was in a magnificent yacht, with musical accompaniment - he lived the royal life. We also know that Moses' Hebrew mother had an influence on his life, so he was certainly raised in the Hebrew heritage of his mother.

d. An ancient Christian writer named Origen had a fanciful allegorical way of interpreting the Scriptures, and what he does with this account of Moses and Pharaoh's daughter is a good example of the peril of over-allegorizing the Scriptures. In Origen's take on this passage:

- Pharaoh represents the devil
- The male and female Hebrew children represent the animal and rational aspects of the soul
- The devil wants to kill the rational character of man, but keep alive his animal character
- The two midwives are the Old and New Testaments

- Pharaoh wants to corrupt the midwives so that the rational character of man will be destroyed
- Because the midwives were faithful, God builds houses of prayer all over the earth
- Pharaoh's daughter represents the church, and gives refuge to Moses - who represents the law
- The waters of the Nile represent the waters of baptism
- When we come to the waters of baptism and take the law into our heart - the royal palaces - then the law grows up into spiritual maturity
- i. Clarke says well of this kind of interpretation: "Every passage and fact might then be obliged to say *something, any thing, every thing, or nothing*, according to the *fancy, peculiar creed, or caprice* of the interpreter."

B. Moses' escape from Egypt.

1. (11-14) Moses kills an Egyptian and his crime is discovered.

Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw

no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day,

behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

a. **When Moses was grown:** Act. 7:23 says this happened when Moses was forty years old.

Up until then, he was trained and groomed to become the next Pharaoh of Egypt, all the while aware of his true origins because of his mother.

b. **He killed the Egyptian:** Moses was certainly right in preventing the beating of **one of his brethren**; yet at the same time this was perhaps a premature attempt to fulfill his destiny. Moses tried to make himself Israel's

deliverer in a way that made sense to the way man thinks and plans.

i. Act. 7:23-25 shows us exactly where Moses' heart was: *Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.*

ii. If Moses ever sat down and decided to deliver his people from their Egyptian bondage, he would *never* plan it this way:

"My brother Aaron and I will go to Pharaoh with a special stick that turns into a snake.

We'll ask him to let us go back to Canaan, and if he says no, we'll bring plagues of blood in the Nile River, frogs, mosquitoes, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. If all that doesn't work, we'll kill all the firstborn of Egypt and escape across the Red Sea, which will part for us and flow back

to drown the Egyptians. Then we'll cross the wilderness and come to Canaan."

iii. Moses planned the deliverance of Israel the way any man would, and logically saw

himself as the key man - because of his accepted leadership among the Egyptians. The only problem was that *God* was going to deliver Israel and use Moses in a way that no man would ever dream of.

iv. Moses had no idea of it at the time, but he was too big for God to use. Moses tried to do the Lord's work in man's wisdom and power. It wouldn't work. After 40 years of seemingly perfect preparation, Moses had another 40 years of seemingly meaningless waiting to perfect God's preparation.

c. **Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?** Moses' leadership was not accepted by the Jewish masses, even though God *had* made him a **prince and a judge over** them. Moses, like Jesus, was rejected by Israel at his "first coming."

i. Both Moses and Jesus were:

- Favored by God from birth
- Miraculously preserved in childhood
- Mighty in words and deed
- Offered deliverance to Israel
- Rejected with spite
- Rejected in their right to be *ruler and a judge* over Israel

ii. Just like Jesus, Moses could not deliver when he lived in the palaces of glory. He had to come down off the throne, away from the palace and into a humble place before he could deliver his people.

2. (15-19) Moses escapes to Midian.

When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of

Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "*How is it that* you have come so soon today?" And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock."

a. **Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh:** Moses, fleeing for his life, probably felt that God's plan for his life was completely defeated.

He probably believed that every chance he ever had to deliver his people was now over and there was nothing *he* could do. At this point, Moses was right where God wanted him.

b. **Dwelt in the land of Midian:** If Moses went into the area of Canaan and Syria, he would have found no refuge - there was a treaty between Rameses II and the Hittite king to the effect that fugitives along the northern route to Syria would be arrested and extradited.

So Moses went southeast instead, to **Midian**.

i. In that day **Midian** described the area on both the west and east sides of the Reed

Sea, land that today is both Saudi Arabia (on the east of the Reed Sea) and Egypt (on the Sinai Peninsula, on the west of the Reed Sea).

c. **The priest of Midian had seven**

daughters: Finally coming to Midian, Moses met the daughters of a **priest of Midian** -

likely a descendant of one of Abraham's other children through Keturah named Midian (Gen. 25:1-2).

i. Because of this connection with Abraham, we have good reason to believe he was a true priest, and worshipped the true God. God led Moses to this specific family at this specific time.

d. **Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock:** In Egypt Moses enjoyed life as one of the royal family and was waited on hand and foot. In the distant desert of Midian, Moses finally had an opportunity to be a servant and he did a good job, working hard to help water the flocks of Jethro's daughters.

3. (20-22) Moses is accepted into the family of the priest of Midian.

So he said to his daughters, "And where *is* he?

Why *is* it *that* you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. And she bore *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

a. **Moses was content to live with the man:** By taking a wife and having a son, Moses seems to give up on Egypt and his hope of being a deliverer for Israel. Moses was content with

where God put him, even though Midian was very different from Egypt.

b. We make a mistake when we think that the years in Midian were a "waiting" time for Moses.

They were instead, *working* years; he had never worked this hard in his life! God trained him, shaping him for his future calling, but Moses was certainly not "on the shelf."

4. (23-25) God remembers Israel and turns His attention to them.

Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to

God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.

a. So God heard their groaning, and God

remembered: If Moses "forgot" about Israel in Egypt (in the sense of turning his active

attention away from them), God did not. God

remembered (again, in the sense of turning His active attention towards them) Israel and their affliction.

b. God remembered His covenant with

Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob: God did not turn His attention to Israel because they were such good people, but because of the covenant He made with them. He gives His love

and attention to us on the same basis - the

covenant relationship we have with God through Jesus.

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2 The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son.

When she saw that he was a healthy child, she hid him for three months. **3** But when she was no longer able to hide

him, she took a papyrus basket for him and sealed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and set it among

the reeds along the edge of the Nile. **4** His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself by the Nile, while her attendants were walking alongside the river, and she saw the basket among the reeds. She sent one

of her attendants, took it, **6** opened it, and saw the child - a boy, crying! - and she felt compassion for him and said,

"This is one of the Hebrews' children."

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get a nursing woman for you from the Hebrews, so that she

may nurse the child for you?" **8** Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes, do so." So the young girl went and got the child's mother. **9** Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.

10 When the child grew older she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "Because I drew him from the water."

11 In those days, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and observed their hard labor, and he saw an Egyptian man attacking a Hebrew man, one of his own people. **12** He looked this way and that and saw that no one was there, and then he attacked the Egyptian and concealed the body in the sand. **13** When he went out the next day, there were two Hebrew men fighting. So he said to the one who was in the wrong, "Why are you attacking your fellow Hebrew?"

14 The man replied, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Are you planning to kill me like you killed that Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, thinking, "Surely what I did has become known." **15** When Pharaoh heard about this event, he sought to kill Moses. So Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he settled by a certain well.

16 Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and began to draw water and fill the troughs in order to water their father's flock. **17** When some shepherds came and drove them away, Moses came up and defended them and then watered their flock. **18** So when they came home to their father Reuel, he asked, "Why have you come home so early today?" **19** They said, "An Egyptian man rescued us from the shepherds, and he actually drew water for us and watered the flock!" **20** He said to his daughters, "So where is he? Why in the world did you leave the man? Call him, so that he may eat a meal with us."

21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. **22** When she bore a son, Moses named him Gershom, for he said, "I have become a resident foreigner in a foreign land."

23 During that long period of time the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites groaned because of the slave labor. They cried out, and their desperate cry because of their slave labor went up to God. **24** God heard their groaning, God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, **25** God saw the Israelites, and God understood....

1 Now Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb.

Guzik - Exodus 3:1-22

Exodus 3 - Moses and the Burning Bush

A. God's call to Moses from the burning bush.

1. (1-3) Moses and the burning bush on Mount Horeb.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

a. **Moses was tending the flock of Jethro**

his father-in-law: "The Hebrew suggests that this was his habitual occupation." (Cole) By now, it was 40 years that Moses lived as an obscure shepherd out in the desert of Midian. At this point his life was so humble that he didn't even have a flock of sheep to call his own - the sheep belonged to his father-in-law.

b. Came to Horeb, the mountain of God:

Moses brought the sheep to this mountain, also later called Mount Sinai. **Horeb** probably means "desert" or "desolation," and the name gives an idea of the terrain.

c. The bush was burning with fire, but the

bush was not consumed: It wasn't just that Moses saw a bush burning; apparently, it is not uncommon for a plant like this to spontaneously ignite out in that desert. Nevertheless, two things were distinctive about that bush: **the Angel of the LORD appeared . . . from the midst** of the bush; and though the bush

burned, **the bush was not consumed.**

i. The bush burning but not being consumed was a magnetic sight to Moses - it drew him in for a closer examination. Some say the burning bush here is a picture of God's grace that draws us to Him. In this picture, you have a thorn-bush (the original Hebrew word comes from the word "to stick or to prick," this meaning a thorn-bush or bramble) which is a figure of the curse (Adam was cursed to bring forth **thorns and thistles** from the earth, Gen. 3:18).

The "curse" is burned (a picture of judgment) without being consumed - therefore, a picture of God's mercy and grace.

2. (4-6) From the burning bush, God calls to Moses.

So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground."

Moreover He said, "I *am* the God of your father; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

a. **When the LORD saw that he turned:** God didn't speak to Moses until He has Moses' attention. Often God's Word doesn't touch our heart the way that it might because we don't give it our attention.

i. The burning bush was a spectacular phenomenon that captured Moses' attention; but it changed nothing until Moses received the Word of God there.

b. **God called to him from the midst of the bush:** Moses didn't see anyone in the burning bush; yet God, in the presence of the *Angel of the LORD* (Exo. 3:2) was there, calling out to Moses from the midst of the burning bush.

i. Undoubtedly, this is another occasion where Jesus appeared before His incarnation in the Old Testament as *the Angel of the LORD*, as He did many times (Gen. 16:7-13, Jdg. 2:1-5, Jdg. 6:11-24, Jdg. 13:3-22).

ii. We say this is God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, because of God the Father, it is said

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (Joh. 1:18), and that no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1Ti. 6:16).

c. **Moses, Moses!** God's first words to Moses call him by name. This shows that even though Moses was now an obscure, forgotten shepherd on the backside of the desert, God knew who he was, and Moses was important to God.

d. **Then He said:** God told Moses to do two things. First, He told Moses to keep a distance (**Do not draw near this place**). Second, to show a reverence for God's presence (**Take your sandals off your feet**). Moses was to show special honor to this place because of the immediate presence of God.

i. **Do not draw near** literally has the sense of "stop coming closer." Moses was on his way for an up-close examination of this burning bush when God stopped him short.

ii. This was a holy place; and because God is holy, there will always be a distance between God and man. Even in perfection man will never be equal to God, though we will be able to have closer fellowship with Him than ever.

iii. **Take your sandals off your feet:**

Removing the sandals showed an appropriate *humility*, because the poorest and most needy have no shoes, and servants usually went barefoot. It also recognized the *immediate presence* of God. In many cultures, you take off your shoes when you come into someone's house, and now Moses was in God's "house," a place of His immediate presence.

e. **The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:** God revealed Himself to Moses by declaring His relationship to the patriarchs. This reminded Moses that God is the God of the covenant, and His covenant with Israel was still valid and important. This isn't a "new God" meeting Moses, but the same God that dealt with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**.

i. God will reveal Himself to Moses more intimately than He had to any of the patriarchs; yet it all begins with God

reminding Moses of the bridge of covenant they meet on.

ii. Some in the days of Moses might have thought that God neglected His covenant for the 400 years of Israel's slavery in Egypt, since the time of the patriarchs.

Nevertheless, God was at work during that time, preserving and multiplying the nation.

f. **Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God:** God asked of Moses to do what is appropriate for a creature before their Creator - a reverence and recognition of holiness. Moses responded as a man who knew he is not only a creature, but a sinful creature - he **hid his face**.

i. In his years in the wilderness of Midan, Moses must have often remembered how he murdered an Egyptian and how proud he was to think he could deliver Israel himself. Moses might have remembered a thousands sins, both real and imagined - now, when God appeared, he responded in a way completely different than he might have 40 years before.

B. God's commission to Moses.

1. (7-10) God explains His general plan to Moses, and Moses' place in the plan.

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

a. I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land:

Obviously, God did not just then decided to give Israel the land of Canaan - it was the land that He promised to the patriarchs some 400 years previous to this.

b. I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry: So Moses and Israel can see the compassionate heart of God, He emphasized that He would deliver Israel from the taskmasters of Egypt.

i. The land of Canaan belonged to Israel since the day God promised it to Abraham.

God will move Israel there *now* because of the compassion of His heart. The actions were ordained long ago, but the timing was prompted by God's heartfelt love for His people.

c. I have come down to deliver them . . . I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people: There was a connection between the principles. God was going to do it, but He still wanted to use Moses. God could do it all by Himself, but it is God's plan to work with and through people - we are *workers together with Him* (2Co. 6:1).

2. (11-12) Moses' answer, and God's reply to that answer.

But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

a. **Who am I?** 40 years before, Moses thought he knew who he was: he was a prince of Egypt and a Hebrew, God's chosen instrument to deliver Israel. After forty years of chasing sheep around the desert, Moses didn't have the same self-sure confidence that he once had.

b. **I will certainly be with you:** God's reply is intended to take Moses' focus off of himself and on where it *should be* - on God. Therefore, God never answered the question " **Who am I?** "

Instead, He reminded Moses " **I will certainly be with you.**"

i. This was a great opportunity to deal with Moses' "self-esteem" problem, but God ignored the solutions we usually use

regarding this "problem." Moses only had a self-esteem problem when he was too

confident in his own ability to deliver Israel.

ii. **Who am I?** wasn't the right question;

" *Who is God?* " was the proper question.

God's identity was more important than who

Moses was. When we know the God who is

with us, we can step forth confidently to do

His will.

iii. **I will certainly be with you:** After this, Moses had no right to protest further. From

here his objections move from a godly lack

of self-reliance to an ungodly lack of faith.

c. **When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain:**

As Moses tended his flock in the wilderness, it probably seemed totally unlikely that he would lead all three million of his people to this same **mountain** - but God promised that this would be so, as **a sign to you that I have sent you.**

3. (13-14) The revelation of God's name to Moses.

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM ." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

a. **And they say to me, "What *is* His name?" what shall I say to them?**

Rightfully, Moses sensed he needed credentials before the people of Israel. Before, he thought he had the credentials because he was a prince of Egypt. 40 years of tending sheep took away his sense of self-reliance.

i. When God revealed Himself to man in the days of the patriarchs it was often associated with a newly revealed name or title for God.

Abraham, in the encounter with Melchizedek called on *God Most High* (Gen. 14:22)

· Abraham later encountered *Almighty God* (Gen. 17:1)

· Abraham came to know the LORD as *Everlasting God* (Gen. 21:33), and *The-LORD-Will-Provide* (Gen. 22:14)

· Hagar encountered *You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees* (Gen. 16:13)

· Jacob met *El Elohe Israel* (Gen. 33:20) and *El Bethel* (Gen. 35:7).

ii. Now, when Moses comes to the elders of Israel with a "new message" from God, it is logical to think they would ask, "What name did He reveal Himself to you under? What new revelation from God do you have?"

b. **And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I**

AM." Is there a difference between **I AM WHO**

I AM and **I AM** and *Yahweh*? Not really, because each of these sayings express the same idea.

i. Cole on: **I AM WHO I AM**: "This pithy clause is clearly a reference to the name

YHWH. Probably 'Yahweh' is regarded as a

shortening of the whole phrase, and a

running together of the clause into one

word." In verse 15, when God says: *Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: "The LORD God of your fathers . . ."*, God is referring back to the name **I AM WHO I AM**.

ii. *Yahweh* was not a new name, nor an unknown name - it appears more than 160

times in the book of Genesis. Moses'

mother's name was *Jochabed* meaning,

Yahweh is my glory. Moses and Israel knew the name *Yahweh*. God did not give Moses a "new and improved" name of God, but the name they had known before. God called

them back to the faith of the patriarchs, not to something "new."

iii. How did this name come to be

pronounced *Jehovah*? The pious Jews of

later years did not want to pronounce the

name of God out of reverence, so they left

the vowels out of His name and simply said

the word *Lord* (*adonai*) instead. If the vowels of the word *adonai* are put over the consonants for YHWH, you can get

the name "Jehovah." All this came about much later; in the days of Bible, the name was

pronounced *Yah-weh* or *Yah-veh*.

c. **I AM has sent me to you**: God tells Moses His name is **I AM** because God simply *is*; there was never a time when He did not exist, or a time when He will cease to exist.

i. The name **I AM** has within it the idea of *aseity* - that God is completely independent; that He relies on nothing for life or

existence (Isa. 40:28-29; Joh. 5:26). God doesn't need anybody or anything - life is in Himself.

ii. Also inherent in the idea behind the name

I AM is the sense that God is "the becoming one"; God becomes whatever is lacking in

our time of need. The name **I AM** invites us to fill in the blank to meet our need - when

we are in darkness, Jesus says *I am the*

light; when we are hungry, He says *I am the bread of life*,

when we are defenseless, He says *I am the Good Shepherd*.

God is the becoming one, becoming what we need.

d. **I AM**: This is a divine title that Jesus took upon Himself often, clearly identifying Himself with the voice from the burning bush.

i. *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that **I AM***

[He], you will die in your sins. (Joh. 8:24) ii. *Then Jesus said*

*to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that **I***

AM *[He], and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."* (Joh. 8:28)

iii. *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I AM**."* (Joh. 8:58)

iv. *Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that **I***

AM (Joh. 13:19)

v. *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"*

They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

*Jesus said to them, "**I AM** [He]." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.*

Now when He said to them, "I am [He],"

they drew back and fell to the ground. (Joh.

18:4-6)

4. (15-18) God tells Moses what to say to the elders of Israel. Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name forever, and this *is* My memorial to all generations.' Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'"

a. Thus you shall say to the children of

Israel: After four hundred years in Egypt, Moses had the job of announcing that *now* was the time for the children of Israel to go back to Canaan, and take the land God promised to their fathers.

i. This was probably totally contrary to what the elders and people of Israel desired. In four hundred years, you set down roots. They probably had no desire to return to the Promised Land; all they wanted was to be made more comfortable in Egypt.

b. Then they will heed your voice is a precious promise to Moses. Forty years before, when it seemed that he had everything going for him, the people of Israel rejected him as a deliverer for the nation. Surely, he must be wondering why they would listen to him now, when it seemed he had nothing going for him.

i. But Moses had *God* going for him now; they would indeed listen to Moses' message.

5. (19-22) God tells Moses how it will go with the Egyptians.

"But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put *them* on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

a. **I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go:** God knew this from the beginning.

He knew what it would take to move the heart of Pharaoh, and the plagues and calamities to come were engineered for a specific purpose and they were not haphazardly planned.

i. Moses asked God about how his fellow Israelites would receive the news of the deliverance from Egypt, but getting the people of Israel behind Moses was only a small part of the struggle ahead - what about the Egyptians? How would they ever agree to let this free labor force leave the country? Without Moses asking, God answered this question.

b. **I will give this people favor . . . you shall not go empty-handed:** God promised to arrange things not only to move Pharaoh's

heart, but also to move the heart of the Egyptian people so that when Israel did depart, they would be showered with **silver** and **gold** and **clothing**. This was not stealing or extortion, it was the appropriate wages for the years of forced labor.

i. In Deu. 15:12-14, God says that if you have a slave, and his time of service is up, *you shall not let him go away empty-handed*. God was not going to let Israel leave their slavery in Egypt empty-handed; instead, they would **plunder the Egyptians**.

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2 The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. He looked – and the bush was ablaze with fire, but it was not being consumed! **3** So Moses thought, “I will turn aside to see this amazing sight.

Why does the bush not burn up?” **4** When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him from within the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” **5** God said, “Do not approach any closer!

Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” **6** He added, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. **8** I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a land that is both good and spacious, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the region of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. **9** And now indeed the cry of the Israelites has come to me, and I have also seen how severely the Egyptians oppress them. **10** So now go, and I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

11 Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, or that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 He replied, "Surely I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you: When you bring the people out of Egypt, you and they will serve God on this mountain."

13 Moses said to God, "If I go to the Israelites and tell them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' – what should I say to them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM that I AM." And he said, "You must say this to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" **15** God also said to Moses, "You must say this to the Israelites, 'The LORD – the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial from generation to generation.'

16 "Go and bring together the elders of Israel and tell them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, appeared to me – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – saying, "I have attended carefully to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt, **17** and I have promised that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

18 "The elders will listen to you, and then you and the elders of Israel must go to the king of Egypt and tell him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' **19** But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, not even under force. **20** So I will extend my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders that I will do among them, and after that he will release you.

21 "I will grant this people favor with the Egyptians, so that when you depart you will not leave empty-handed. **22**

Every woman will ask her neighbor and the one who happens to be staying in her house for items of silver and gold and for clothing. You will put these articles on your sons and daughters – thus you will plunder Egypt!"

1 Moses answered again, "And if they do not believe me or pay attention to me, but say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you'?"

Guzik - Exodus 4:1-31

Exodus 4 - Moses' Commission from God

A. God gives Moses signs to confirm his ministry.

1. (1) Moses asks, "How will they believe me?"

Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

a. **But suppose they will not believe me:** It was not wrong for Moses to initially ask *Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?* in Exo. 3:11; this was a logical question considering how great the task was. Yet God answered this question

more than adequately in Exo. 3:12: *I will certainly be with you.* After that point, and in this passage, Moses' questions show unbelief more than sincere seeking.

b. **But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice:** In Exo. 3:18, God

promised that the leaders of Israel *would* listen to Moses. He said, " *they will heed your voice.*"

When Moses makes this protest he may as well be saying, "But what if you are wrong, God?"

i. It was good when Moses had no confidence in the flesh; but it is bad that he now lacked confidence in God.

2. (2-5) The first sign: Moses' rod turns to a snake and back again.

So the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take *it* by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), that they

may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

a. **What is that in your hand:** This reflects a precious principle regarding how God uses men

- God used what Moses had in his **hand**. Moses'

years of tending sheep were not useless. Those years had put into Moses **hand** things he could use for God's glory. God didn't use the scepter that was in Moses' royal hand when he lived in Egypt, but He did use the simple shepherd's staff.

i. God likes to use what is in our hand.

God used what was in
Shamgar's hand (Jdg. 3:31)

· God used what was in David's hand
(1Sa. 17:49)

· God used the jawbone of a donkey in
Samson's hand (Jdg. 15:15)

· God used five loaves and two fish in
the hand of a little boy (Joh. 6:9)

b. **He said, "A rod"** : That rod of Moses would part the Red Sea. It would strike a rock and see water pour forth. It would be raised over battle until Israel was victorious. It would be called *the rod of God* (Exo. 4:20; 17:9).

c. **It became a serpent:** Not only did Moses' rod become a snake; it became a real snake that was frightening enough to Moses that he ran from it.

d. **Reach out your hand and take it by the tail:** We see the faith of Moses when he reached out to grab the snake when God commanded him to. The tail is the most dangerous place to grab a snake; yet Moses

was unharmed.

i. In this little incident Moses learned how to do what God tells him to do even when it is uncomfortable.

e. That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers . . . has appeared to

you: This miracle would make the children of Israel realize that **the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob** was with them and that the God of the covenant had not forsaken them.

3. (6-9) The second and third signs: Moses is made leprous and whole again; water turns to blood and back again.

Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous, like snow. And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his *other* flesh. "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.

And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour *it* on the dry *land*. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land*."

a. **It was restored like his other flesh:** Each of the first two signs have to do with

conversion. Something good and useful (a rod or a hand) is converted to something evil (a serpent or a leprous hand), and significantly, they are then converted back again.

i. There was a real message in the first two signs. The first said, "Moses, if you obey Me, your enemies will be made powerless." The second said "Moses, if you obey Me, your pollution can be made pure." Doubts in each of these areas probably hindered Moses, and before those signs ministered to anyone

else, the ministered to Moses. This is the pattern with all God's leaders.

b. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land:

The third sign is simply a sign of judgment. Good, pure waters were made foul and bloody by the work of God and they did not turn back again.

This showed that if the miracles of conversion did not turn the hearts of the people, then

perhaps the sign of judgment will. **If they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice** shows that if the sign of judgment is only given when unbelief persists in the face of the miracles of conversion right before them.

4. (10) Moses makes an excuse: "I can't speak well."

Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue."

a. **O my Lord, I am not eloquent:** After these remarkably persuasive signs, Moses still

objected to God's call. Moses revealed that he was not confident with his ability to speak -

slow of speech is literally "heavy of mouth."

b. **I am slow of speech and slow of tongue:** It seems that Moses' excuse was not justified.

Clearly 40 years before this Moses was not

slow of speech and slow of tongue. Act.

7:22 says *Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.*

i. In those years of silence - preaching only to the sheep - Moses had to deal with all the discouragement and sense of failure and condemnation that accumulated over 40 years. It isn't hard to see why he now believes he can't do what he clearly thought he could do before.

ii. Instead of Moses "regressing" in speaking ability during those years in the desert, it is far more reasonable to believe that he has simply lost confidence in himself - something that can be good, but not if it makes him lose confidence in what God can do in him.

5. (11-12) God's response to Moses' excuse.

So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

a. **Who made man's mouth?** The fact that Moses believed that he was not eloquent is completely beside the point. The God who created the most eloquent mouths who ever lived was on his side.

b. **Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?** This is a dramatic statement revealing the sovereignty of God, and God reveals it in the context of an invitation to trust God and to work with Him.

i. There is not the slightest sense of fatalism in this declaration of God's sovereignty. It is *never* "God is so mighty we can't do anything," but it is *always* "God is so mighty, He can work through us if we make ourselves available."

c. Some have thought it cruel that God would say He **makes the mute, the deaf, . . . the blind**. Nevertheless the point here is not to analyze the origin of evil, but to show that God is so mighty that He can even call the mute, the deaf, and the blind to do His work. Moses'

perceived inadequacies don't matter at all.

i. If Moses was a poor speaker, was this news to God? Does God have trouble

keeping track of who is deaf, who is blind, and who is mute? Does Moses really think God made a mistake here?

ii. If Moses was a poor speaker, it didn't matter - the mighty God said, "**I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.**" By extension, God is sufficient for us, no matter what real or imagined inadequacies we have.

6. (13-17) Moses' unwillingness, and God's reply.

But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever *else* You may send." So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

a. **Please send by the hand of whomever**

else You may send: Finally, Moses is done with excuses and declares the real state of his heart. Simply, he would much rather that God send someone else. His problem isn't really a

lack of ability, it is a lack of willingness.

i. "It's common for men to give pretended reasons instead of one real one." (Benjamin Franklin)

b. **So the anger of the LORD was kindled**

against Moses: God was not angry when

Moses asked, "*Who am I?*" (Exo. 3:11). He was not angry when Moses asked, "Who should I say sent me?" (Exo. 3:13). He was not angry when Moses disbelieved God's Word and said, "*suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice*" (Exo. 4:1). He was not even angry when Moses falsely

claimed that he was not and had never been eloquent (Exo. 4:10) - but God *was* angry when Moses was just plain unwilling.

i. There may be a hundred understandable reasons why Moses was unwilling, some of them making a lot of sense. Perhaps Moses really *wanted* to serve, but was unwilling because of past rejection. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that Moses was *unwilling*, not *unable*.

c. Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I

know that he can speak well: When God brought Aaron to help lead with Moses, it was an expression of His chastening to Moses, not of His approval or "giving in" to Moses. Aaron was more of a *problem* to Moses than help.

i. Aaron did turn out to be a source of problems for Moses. Aaron instigated the worship of the golden calf, fashioning the calf himself and building the altar himself (Exo. 32:1-6). Aaron's sons blasphemed God with impure offerings (Lev. 10:1-7). At one time, Aaron openly led a mutiny against Moses (Num. 12:1-8).

ii. As these episodes unfolded, Moses surely looked back at why the LORD gave Aaron to Moses as a partner - because God was angry at Moses' unwillingness.

d. I know that he can speak well: Aaron was a smooth talker, but a man weak on *content*. Moses had to put the words of God into the mouth of Aaron (**you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth**). In this sense Aaron was like a modern-day news anchorman, who does nothing but read what others have written for him.

i. Aaron wasn't God's spokesman; he was the spokesman of Moses. God doesn't need

leaders like this. It isn't God's way to have a man minister as a smooth talker but not be qualified for leadership. God wants to combine the offices of "talker" and "leader."

B. Moses leaves Midian, goes to Egypt.

1. (18) Moses asks leave of his father-in-law Jethro to go to Egypt.

So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who *are* in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

a. **So Moses went:** When the fire fades from the burning bush and when the voice of God is silent across the desert, then it is upon us to *obey*, and to do what God told us to do. More than one person has had a spectacular "burning bush" experience and then carried on as if it had never happened.

i. Did Moses have any idea what he was getting into when he agreed to take the LORD's call? Could he see the Egyptian army closing in, and God parting the Red Sea through Moses' hand? Could he see the song of victory, the water from the rock, the manna from heaven, the battles won through prayer? Could he see vision of God on Mount Sinai, the voice of God from heaven, the tablets of stone, the golden calf? Could he see the tabernacle built, the priests consecrated? Could he see the spies sent forth into Canaan, the response of unbelief, and a thirty-eight year sentence to wander the wilderness? Could he see a lonely climb to the top of Mount Pisgah, where he would die looking out over the land of promise? Could he see the honor of sitting beside the LORD on the Mount of

Transfiguration? Did Moses have any idea what he was getting into?

b. **Please let me go:** Moses is a good example of the truth that serving God doesn't mean neglecting your employer. Moses made sure that it was clear for him to go.

c. **Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive:** As well, Moses didn't really tell his father-in-law the story behind his desire to return to Egypt. Perhaps he just felt it was too fantastic, and would rather let God demonstrate His Word through fulfilling it.

i. It is far more important - and more beneficial - for others to see the fruit of God's guidance in your life than to hear you explain all you believe God said to you.

2. (19-23) God tells Moses how events will unfold in Egypt. And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel *is* My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'" "

a. **The men who sought your life are dead .**

. . **I will harden his heart:** God knew Moses was safe in Egypt, and so eased his mind from this anxiety; but God also knew that He would **harden** Pharaoh's heart, and that it would take the death of the firstborn before Pharaoh would agree to release the children of Israel.

i. Sometimes, it says that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh (Exo. 4:21). Sometimes it says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exo. 8:15). Sometimes it says simply that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, without saying who did it (Exo. 7:13).

ii. Who really hardened Pharaoh's heart? We might say that it was both God and Pharaoh; but whenever God hardened Pharaoh's heart, He never did it *against* Pharaoh's will. Pharaoh never said, "Oh, I want to do what is good and right and I want to bless these people of Israel" and God answered, "No, for I will harden your heart against them!"

When God hardened Pharaoh's heart, He allowed Pharaoh's heart to do what Pharaoh wanted to do - God was giving Pharaoh over to his sin (Rom. 1:18-32).

iii. "God does not harden men by putting evil into them, but by not giving them mercy." (Augustine)

b. **Israel is My son, My firstborn:** As a picture, God regarded Israel as His **firstborn** and God knew that there would be an exchange of His **firstborn** (Israel) and Egypt's firstborn.

3. (24-26) Moses' life is spared on the way.

And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast *it* at *Moses'* feet, and said, "Surely you *are* a husband of blood to me!" So He let him go. Then she said, "*You are* a husband of blood!"; because of the circumcision.

a. **The LORD met him and sought to kill**

him: This is a mysterious event; but it seems that God is confronting Moses - in the strongest possible way - because

Moses had not circumcised his son. God demands that this be

set right before Moses enter Egypt and begin to fulfill the call of God.

i. There is often a point of confrontation in the life of the leader where God demands that they lay aside some area of compromise, and will not allow them to progress further until they do.

b. **Surely you are a husband of blood to**

me! Perhaps Zipporah objected to the rite of circumcision. She was not an Israelite and may have thought it a barbaric custom. Perhaps this was why God held Moses accountable (for not doing what was right, even though his wife didn't like it), but disabled Moses so that Zipporah had to perform the circumcision itself.

i. Some wonder why Moses' wife seems so bitter here. Perhaps for the first time she recognizes the serious nature of her husband's call and how important it is for their whole family to walk in the ways of the LORD.

4. (27-31) Moses and Aaron present themselves to the people of Israel.

And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they

bowed their heads and worshiped.

a. So he went and met him on the

mountain of God: God told Moses that He would send Aaron to him (Exo. 4:14), and now it happens. God is showing Moses that He keeps His promises.

b. So the people believed: It happened just as God said. God had promised *then they will heed your voice* (Exo. 3:18), and the people of Israel did - and their excitement was real as they anticipated the deliverance of the nation.

c. When they heard that the LORD had

visited the children of Israel: Years before when Moses offered himself as a deliverer to Israel, they rejected him. Now the time and the circumstances are right, and God's destiny for Moses' life will begin to be fulfilled.

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2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." **3** The LORD said, "Throw it to the ground."

So he threw it to the ground, and it became a snake, and Moses ran from it. **4** But the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand and grab it by the tail" - so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand - **5** "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

6 The LORD also said to him, "Put your hand into your robe." So he put his hand into his robe, and when he brought it out - there was his hand, leprous like snow! **7**

He said, "Put your hand back into your robe." So he put his hand back into his robe, and when he brought it out from his robe - there it was, restored like the rest of his skin! **8** "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the former sign, then they may believe the latter sign. **9** And if they do not believe even these two signs or listen to you, then take

some water from the Nile and pour it out on the dry ground. The water you take out of the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

10 Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not an eloquent man, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

11 The LORD said to him, “Who gave a mouth to man, or who makes a person mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? **12** So now go, and I will be with your mouth and will teach you what you must say.”

13 But Moses said, “O my Lord, please send anyone else whom you wish to send!”

14 Then the LORD became angry with Moses, and he said, “What about your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak very well. Moreover, he is coming to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart.

15 “So you are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And as for me, I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you both what you must do. **16**

He will speak for you to the people, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were his God. **17** You will also take in your hand this staff, with which you will do the signs.”

18 So Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, “Let me go, so that I may return to my relatives in Egypt and see if they are still alive.” Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” **19** The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, because all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” **20** Then Moses took his wife and sons and put them on a donkey and headed back to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the staff of God in his hand. **21** The LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put under your control. But I will harden his heart and he will not let the people go. **22** You must say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is my son, my firstborn,” **23** and I said to you,

‘Let my son go that he may serve me,’ but since you have refused to let him go, I will surely kill your son, your firstborn!””

24 Now on the way, at a place where they stopped for the night, the LORD met Moses and sought to kill him. **25**

But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off the foreskin of her son and touched it to Moses’ feet, and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me.” **26** So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” referring to the circumcision.)

27 The LORD said to Aaron, “Go to the wilderness to meet Moses. So he went and met him at the mountain of God and greeted him with a kiss. **28** Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him and all the signs that he had commanded him. **29** Then Moses and Aaron went and brought together all the Israelite elders. **30**

Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people, **31** and the people believed. When they heard that the LORD had attended to the Israelites and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed down close to the ground.

1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Release my people so that they may hold a pilgrim feast to me in the desert.’”

Guzik - Exodus 5:1-23

Exodus 5 - Moses Meets Pharaoh; Israel's Burdens Are Increased

A. Pharaoh's receives Moses and Aaron and responds with a command.

1. (1-3) Moses asks Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go to the wilderness to worship.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told

Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" And Pharaoh said, "Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel

go." So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

a. **Let My people go:** To appreciate how audacious Moses' request was, we must understand the power and authority the Pharaohs claimed. Each Pharaoh was said to be the child of the sun; he was a friend to the greatest gods of Egypt and sat with them in their own temples to receive worship alongside them. Pharaoh was nothing like a public servant; the entire public lived to serve the Pharaoh. His power and authority were supreme and there was no constitution or law or legislature higher or even remotely equal to him.

i. An inscription by a Pharaoh on an ancient Egyptian temple gives us the idea: "I am that which was, and is, and shall be, and no man has lifted my veil." The Pharaoh was more than a man; he considered himself a god, and the Egyptians agreed.

b. **Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go:** After Moses had the remarkable encounter at the burning

bush, and after he saw God turn the hearts of the leaders of Israel towards him, Moses now had to confront the real enemy. Pharaoh was not going to give in easily.

i. This must have been a strange day for Moses. He once walked those same palaces as a prince, and perhaps was in line to sit on the same throne of the present Pharaoh.

Yet, *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.* Moses knew both man's power and God's power, and he knew in God he was more powerful than Pharaoh.

c. **Who is the LORD?** Pharaoh did not have the right heart, but he did ask the right question. Moses asked *Who am I?* (Exo. 3:11). The relevant question isn't who Moses is, or who Pharaoh is, but who *God* is.

d. **Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD**

our God: It seems strange to many that Moses only asked for a three-day weekend; after all, he knew what God wanted to do. Was Moses deceptive in only asking for **three days**?

i. Not at all. God had Moses ask first for three days off to test Pharaoh's heart. God gave Pharaoh the chance to agree to something small and to have his heart softened before the big request came.

2. (4-9) Pharaoh increases the burden of the Israelites.

Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor." And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor!" So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.'

Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

a. **Why do you take the people from their work?** Pharaoh not only rejected the idea of giving the Israelites three days off, he saw the request itself as a waste of good working time.

b. **For they are idle; therefore they cry out:** To punish Israel for the request and to give them more work ("You seem to have enough time to make these crazy requests - then you must have enough time to work more!"), Pharaoh commands that the Israelites must gather their own materials (specifically, straw) for making bricks.

i. How was straw used in making bricks? Straw has an acidic content that makes the bricks stronger. The use of straw in making bricks in Egypt during this period is confirmed by archaeology. "Bricks of all sorts have been found in Egypt, some with regularly chopped straw, some with rough roots and oddments, some without straw at all." (Cole)

ii. "The eastern bricks are often made of *clay* and *straw* kneaded together, and then not burned, but thoroughly dried in the sun. This is expressly mentioned by Philo . . . 'because straw is the bond by which the brick is held together.'" (Clarke)

3. (10-14) The Egyptian taskmasters carry out Pharaoh's orders.

And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I will not give you straw. Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.'"

So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters forced *them* to hurry, saying, "Fulfill your work,

your daily quota, as when there was straw." Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten *and* were asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?"

a. **I will not give you straw:** Now the children of Israel are in a worse place than before. To this point, Moses' leadership hasn't made anything better at all. This was very disappointing to a people who had their hopes raised!

b. **And the taskmasters forced them to hurry:** We shouldn't be surprised when the greatest challenges come before the greatest victory. At this point, the victory of God for Israel over Egypt seems a long way away.

B. Pharaoh troubles the children of Israel.

1. (15-19) Pharaoh rebukes the children of Israel, increasing their burdens.

Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing thus with your servants? There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us,

'Make brick!' And indeed your servants *are* beaten, but the fault *is* in your *own* people." But he said, "You *are* idle! Idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.' Therefore go now *and* work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks."

And the officers of the children of Israel saw *that* they *were* in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce *any* bricks from your daily quota."

a. **The officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh:** In their trouble, the children of Israel did not turn to God; they did not turn to Moses. Instead, they looked to **Pharaoh** to solve their problems, and therefore they will be disappointed.

b. **You are idle! Idle!** The children of Israel found no relief by going to Pharaoh. Some Christians put themselves in the same place when Satan gives them grief. They respond by running to Satan for relief - and all he gives them is more bondage.

2. (20-21) The people cry out against Moses.

Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them.

And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

a. **They met Moses and Aaron:** The leaders of the children of Israel were not happy when they came from the presence of Pharaoh, and they thought it was all the fault of Moses and Aaron. Certainly, this was discouraging for Moses; but surely he thought, "It's all right.

When they see all God can do, they won't complain any more. They will be on my side and support me as a leader. It's tough now, but it will get better."

b. **You have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh:** This was the crime of Moses and Aaron. When Israel was a docile slave to Pharaoh, they thought he was their friend. Now that the idea of freedom has entered, Pharaoh shows how he felt about them all along.

i. Again, Satan seems "friendly" to us when we accept his lordship; but when we start to be free in Jesus, he often will try to make life difficult for us.

c. Exo. 4:31 said *So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their*

heads and worshipped. Now, the faith, excitement, and worship of Exodus 4 is gone pretty quickly.

i. Many Christians can have joy when things are easy; but true maturity is when we can have God's peace in the battle.

3. (22-23) Moses complains about the problem to God.

So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people?

Why *is* it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."

a. **Lord, why have You brought trouble on**

this people? Moses is good in his example of boldly pouring out his heart to God; but he fell short in remembering God's promise.

b. **Neither have You delivered Your people**

at all: Back at the burning bush, God said: *But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.* (Exo. 3:19-20) As far as God is concerned, everything is moving according to plan.

i. Even though God warned Moses, it seems he hoped it would all come easy. Moses

wished that he would ask, Pharaoh would

say "yes" and God would be glorified. Why else would Moses say to God, **neither have**

You delivered Your people at all?

c. **Why is it You have sent me?** In this tough time, the same old fears came crashing in on

Moses: "I'm not the man God should send."

"God won't come through." "Pharaoh and the Egyptians are too strong." There was still unbelief and lack of focus on God that had to be cleared out of Moses.

i. "The agony of soul through which Moses passed must have been as death to him. He

died to his self-esteem, to his castle-building, to pride in his miracles, to the enthusiasm of his people, to everything that a popular leader loves. As he lay there on the ground alone before God, wishing himself back in Midian, and thinking himself hardly used, he was falling as a grain of wheat into the ground to die, no longer to abide alone, but to bear much fruit." (Meyer) ii. Moses probably thought that the dying to himself was finished after 40 years of tending sheep in Midian, but it wasn't. It never is. God still will use adversity to train us to trust in Him until the day we go to be with Him in heaven.

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2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey him by releasing Israel? I do not know the LORD, and I will not release Israel!" **3** And they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Let us go a three-day journey into the desert so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, so that he does not strike us with plague or the sword." **4** The king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you cause the people to refrain from their work? Return to your labor!" **5** Pharaoh was thinking, "The people of the land are now many, and you are giving them rest from their labor."

6 That same day Pharaoh commanded the slave masters and foremen who were over the people: **7** "You must no longer give straw to the people for making bricks as before. Let them go and collect straw for themselves. **8**

But you must require of them the same quota of bricks that they were making before. Do not reduce it, for they are slackers. That is why they are crying, 'Let us go sacrifice to our God.' **9** Make the work harder for the men so they will keep at it and pay no attention to lying words!"

10 So the slave masters of the people and their foremen went to the Israelites and said, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I am not giving you straw. **11** You go get straw for yourselves wherever you can find it, because there will be no reduction at all in your workload.'" **12** So the people spread out through all the land of Egypt to collect stubble for straw. **13** The slave masters were pressuring them, saying, "Complete your work for each day, just like when there was straw!" **14** The Israelite foremen whom Pharaoh's slave masters had set over them were beaten and were asked, "Why did you not complete your requirement for brickmaking as in the past – both yesterday and today?"

15

The Israelite foremen went and cried out to Pharaoh, "Why are you treating your servants this way? **16** No straw is given to your servants, but we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are even being beaten, but the fault is with your people."

17 But Pharaoh replied, "You are slackers! Slackers! That is why you are saying, 'Let us go sacrifice to the LORD.'"

18 So now, get back to work! You will not be given straw, but you must still produce your quota of bricks!" **19**

The Israelite foremen saw that they were in trouble when they were told, "You must not reduce the daily quota of your bricks."

20 When they went out from Pharaoh, they encountered Moses and Aaron standing there to meet them, **21** and they said to them, "May the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the opinion of Pharaoh and his servants, so that you have given them an excuse to kill us!"

22 Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Lord, why have you caused trouble for this people? Why did you ever send me? **23** From the time I went to speak to Pharaoh in your name, he has caused trouble for this people, and you have certainly not rescued them!"

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, for compelled by my strong hand he will release them, and by my strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

Guzik - Exodus 6:1-30

Exodus 6 - God's Assurance to Moses

A. God comforts Moses.

1. (1) God's promise to Moses: Pharaoh *will* let you go.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

a. **For with a strong hand he will let you**

go: Not only will Pharaoh *let* the children of Israel leave; he will **drive them out** with a **strong hand**.

b. **Now you shall see what I will do to**

Pharaoh: God wanted Moses to know that He was in charge.

Moses was discouraged because

he was too impressed by Pharaoh and not impressed enough by God.

2. (2-5) The God of the covenant confirms His promise.

And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I *am* the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD I was not known to them. I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have

remembered My covenant."

a. **I am the LORD:** In reminding Moses of the great name of God, He reminds Moses that He

is the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, who will absolutely fulfill His promise to Moses.

b. **I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name**

LORD I was not known to them: Why does God say this? Isn't there an abundance of evidence to show that the patriarchs *did* know God as Yahweh?

i. The patriarchs knew the *name* Yahweh (it is used some 160 times in Genesis); but the great application of the name referred to God who kept and fulfilled the covenant: **I**

have also established My covenant with them. The patriarchs were privileged to know the God who made the covenant, but for them the covenant was barely fulfilled. The patriarchs knew God as the *Maker* of the covenant. Moses and the generation of the Exodus would know God as the One who *fulfilled* the covenant.

ii. **As God Almighty:** In addition, though the patriarchs knew **God Almighty**, they did not know Him as extensively and

intimately as He would reveal Himself to Moses and his generation; they knew the power of God, but didn't have the same personal relationship and revelation Moses would come to know.

iii. For us, God wants to be more than **God Almighty** - He wants us also to know Him as a personal, promise making and promise keeping God, whom we can trust in everything - by what name do *you* know Him?

c. **I have remembered My covenant:** God has remembered His covenant. Can Moses remember his God?

3. (6-8) God's promise of the seven "I wills" to Israel.

"Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the

burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.

Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you *as* a heritage: I *am* the LORD."

a. **I am the LORD**: God goes to the furthest length possible to confirm this covenant with the children of Israel. In seven separate **I will** promises, God says, "I'm going to do it. You can count on me."

i. The promises are glorious, and equally so in their spiritual application to believers:

I will bring you out

- **I will rescue you from their bondage**

- **I will redeem you**

- **I will take you as My people**

- **I will be your God**

- **I will bring you into the Land**

- **I will give it to you as a heritage**

ii. Of course, there is the contrast with the five **I will** statements of Satan in Isa. 14:13-15. The great difference is that Satan was powerless to make any of his "I wills" come to pass. God is more than able to fulfill each of His promises.

b. **And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**: For the first plainly stated time, Moses is to tell Israel what God ultimately

promised - to not only deliver them from the bondage of Egypt, but to give them the land promised to the patriarchs.

c. **I am the LORD:** With this God concluded the promise by reminding all of His covenant making and covenant-keeping name.

4. (9) The response of the children of Israel.

So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.

a. **They did not heed Moses:** After Moses spoke what God told him to say the children of Israel were still stuck in miserable unbelief.

They probably would have said that they did not doubt God but they doubted the messenger, Moses.

b. **Because of anguish of spirit and cruel**

bondage: This is why Israel doubted Moses and God's Word through him. Their centuries of slavery made them think like slaves instead of people of the covenant. Pharaoh was bigger in their eyes than God was.

i. Many Christians find themselves in the same place. They find it hard to trust God and believe that He is *for* them. This is why Paul says we must *not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. The children of Israel needed their minds renewed, and we do also.

ii. Eze. 20:5-9 shows why God was so small and Pharaoh was so big in Israel's heart during this time. Ezekiel explains that they bought into the gods of their oppressors, worshipping the gods of the Egyptians. This is why they didn't trust God, and His messenger Moses! The reason why God did not judge Israel at the time was because He didn't want His name profaned among the

Gentiles.

5. (10-13) God tells Moses to stick with His plan.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land." And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I *am* of uncircumcised lips?" Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

a. **How then shall Pharaoh heed me:** Moses felt that God's way had failed, so why should Moses try again in something that has already failed? How will Moses ever persuade Pharaoh if he can't even persuade his own people?

b. **Then the LORD spoke to Moses and**

Aaron: God wanted Moses to keep plugging away; to not look at Pharaoh, to not look at the children of Israel, to not look at even himself -

but to look at God and God alone.

i. Moses wanted to give up after the first setback. God had much to do in his heart before Moses is ready to deal with all the discouragement ahead as he leads the people to the Promised Land.

ii. God is building endurance in Moses, the ability to stick with God's plan and will even when it doesn't seem to work. This is faith; this is patient endurance in the LORD.

c. **A command for the children of Israel**

and for Pharaoh: Moses had to understand that this was God's *will*, not merely a few suggestions for Israel and Pharaoh. This was His divine command that *would* be accomplished, one way or another.

B. The genealogies of Jacob's first three children: Reuben, Simeon, and Levi.

1. (14-15) The immediate descendants of Reuben and Simeon.

These *are* the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. And the sons of Simeon *were* Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These *are* the families of Simeon.

2. (16-19) The main families descended from Levi.

These *are* the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. The sons of Gershon *were* Libni and Shimi according to their families. And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* one hundred and thirty-three.

The sons of Merari *were* Mahali and Mushi.

These *are* the families of Levi according to their generations.

a. The sons of Levi according to their

generations: In the tribe of Levi, there were three main families - **Gershon, Kohath, and Merari**. Each of these families will be given specific duties in the service of the LORD and His tabernacle.

3. (20-27) How Moses and Aaron descended from Amram, a son of Kohath.

Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram

were one hundred and thirty-seven. The sons of Izhar *were* Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. And the sons of Uzziel *were* Mishaël, Elzaphan, and Zithri.

Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

And the sons of Korah *were* Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites.

Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him

Phinehas. These *are* the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

These *are the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies."

These *are* the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These *are the same* Moses and Aaron.

a. **She bore him Aaron and Moses:** This passage not only tells us the ancestors of Moses and Aaron, but also some of Aaron's descendants. His sons listed here are Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar; and his grandson through Eleazar, whose name was Phinehas.

i. This portion is important because the priesthood that will eventually come from the family of Aaron will be passed down to his descendants. Therefore it was important to know exactly who his descendants were.

b. **The sons of Korah** (cousins to Moses and Aaron; their father Korah was Moses' uncle) will also play part in a significant event before Israel reaches the Promised Land (Numbers 16).

4. (28-30) Moses objects again.

And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, that the LORD

spoke to Moses, saying, "I *am* the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

a. **Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that**

I say to you: God previously commanded Moses to speak to Pharaoh. After the first disappointing experience, Moses now halts in his obedience.
b. I am of uncircumcised lips: This may refer to Moses' idea that he has a speech problem, or it may be that he recognized that he is a sinful man, and therefore unworthy to be used.

i. Moses' feeling may be similar to that of Isaiah in Isa. 6:1-8. Isaiah knew that he was a sinner in God's presence, and sensed that the "center" of his sin was in his lips - as in speaking and communicating in a way that didn't glorify God. God could deal with Isaiah's unclean lips, and He is more than able to deal with Moses' uncircumcised lips. God is also perfectly able to deal with the things in our life - real or imagined - that hinder us from being used by Him.

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2 God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD.

3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'the LORD' I was not known to them. **4** I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as resident foreigners. **5** I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. **6** Therefore, tell the Israelites, 'I am the LORD. I will bring you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians, I will rescue you from the hard labor they impose, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. **7** I will take you to myself for a people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians. **8** I will bring you to the land I swore to give to

Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob – and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD!”

9

Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and hard labor. **10**

Then the LORD said to Moses, **11** “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt that he must release the Israelites from his land.”

12 But Moses replied to the LORD, “If the Israelites did not listen to me, then how will Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with difficulty?”

13 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge for the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

14 These are the heads of their fathers’ households: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were Hanoah and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. These were the clans of Reuben.

15 The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. These were the clans of Simeon.

16 Now these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their records: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

(The length of Levi’s life was 137 years.)

17 The sons of Gershon, by their families, were Libni and Shimei.

18 The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. (The length of Kohath’s life was 133 years.) **19** The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These were the clans of Levi, according to their records.

20 Amram married his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses. (The length of Amram’s life was 137 years.) **21** The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zikri.

22 The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

23 Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

24 The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These were the Korahite clans.

25 Now Eleazar son of Aaron married one of the daughters of Putiel and she bore him Phinehas.

These are the heads of the fathers' households of Levi according to their clans.

26 It was the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by their regiments." **27** They were the men who were speaking to Pharaoh king of Egypt, in order to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the same Moses and Aaron.

28 When the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, **29** he said to him, "I am the LORD. Tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I am telling you." **30** But Moses said before the LORD, "Since I speak with difficulty, why should Pharaoh listen to me?"

1 So the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.

Guzik - Exodus 7:1-25

Exodus 7 - Miracles and Plagues before Pharaoh

A. God lays out the plan to Moses again.

1. (1-2) The re-affirmation of Aaron's place in the ministry of Moses.

So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you *as* God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land."

a. **So the LORD said to Moses:** God showed amazing patience with His servant Moses. After the outburst at the end of the previous chapter, we might expect that God had enough with Moses. Yet God didn't even chastise Moses; He simply told him what to do and set him to do it.

God is rich in mercy.

b. **I have made you as God to Pharaoh:**

Pharaoh had rejected having any direct dealing with Yahweh, as he said in Exo. 5:2: *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?* Therefore, God would now deal with Pharaoh through Moses. This lets Moses know that when Pharaoh rejects him, he really rejects God - and he wouldn't take it so personally.

i. In the same way, God will make us "**as God**" to people we encounter who are rejecting God. If they harden their hearts or reject us, we shouldn't take it personally.

c. **Aaron your brother shall be your**

prophet: If Moses was "**as God**" to Pharaoh, then Aaron was Moses' "prophet" - his spokesman before Pharaoh.

i. Just as Moses was not to act on his own initiative but to wait for God's direction, Aaron was not to act on his own initiative, but to wait for Moses' direction.

d. **You shall speak all that I command you:** God will not allow Moses to let the seeming failure of his first encounter with Pharaoh to discourage him. Moses is simply commanded to go.

2. (3) God promises to harden Pharaoh's heart.

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt."

a. **I will harden Pharaoh's heart:** We

remember that God will not harden Pharaoh's heart *against* Pharaoh's own desire. It is not as if Pharaoh wished to have a tender heart towards Israel but God would not allow him.

God confirmed Pharaoh in his wicked inclination against Israel.

b. **Harden Pharaoh's heart:** Instead, Pharaoh revealed his heart when he refused the humble request of Moses back in 5:1-4; now, God will merely strengthen Pharaoh in the evil already chose.

i. God can do the same today. In our rebellion, we may reach the place where God will strengthen us in the evil we desire:

Therefore God also gave them up to their uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts . . .

and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting (Rom. 1:24, 28).

3. (4-7) Why God will harden Pharaoh's heart.

"But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies *and* My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." Then Moses and Aaron did *so*; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. And Moses *was* eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

a. **But Pharaoh will not heed you:** God knew from the beginning that Pharaoh would not agree to Moses' request. It was no surprise to God that Pharaoh did not heed Moses.

b. **So that I may lay My hand on Egypt . . . and the Egyptians shall know that I am**

the LORD: This explains why the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart - essentially, to bring righteous judgment upon Egypt: Pharaoh and the Egyptians said they didn't know who the LORD was; God is going to let them know.

i. Pharaoh displayed the evil in his heart by rejecting a humble request. In response God will harden Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh will do what he wants to do: sin against Israel and God even more. Then, God will judge that sin.

c. **Moses was eighty years old:** This is

retirement age for many, but Moses knew that God's will was more important than retirement. We also see from this that Aaron was Moses' older brother, so God is going against the conventional customs of that day by making the younger brother more prominent.

B. Moses stands before Pharaoh.

1. (8-10) Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh again.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* let it become a serpent.'" So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

a. **So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh:** The first time Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh everything seemed to go wrong (Exo. 5:15-19). It took real courage for them to go to Pharaoh again, but Moses is simply being obedient to God.

b. **Take your rod and cast it before**

Pharaoh: When God first gave Moses the sign in Exo. 4:1-9, it seemed those signs were primarily for the leaders of Israel - but now, Moses brings the sign before Pharaoh.

c. **Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a**

serpent: The first time Moses appeared before Pharaoh we have no record of a sign performed (Exodus 5). Perhaps Moses figured that the absence of a sign was what made him unsuccessful - now with the miracle, surely Pharaoh will be impressed!

2. (11-13) Pharaoh's magicians imitate the miracle of Aaron's rod.

But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

a. **So the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments:** In the midst of an unmistakable miracle, Satan provided Pharaoh with a reason to doubt - and

Pharaoh seized on the doubt and hardened his heart.

b. **For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents:** How did **the magicians of Egypt** do this **with their enchantments**? Apparently, this wasn't mere magic - this was demonic power showing itself in truly supernatural miracles.

i. Miracles are part of Satan's arsenal. *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved* (2Th. 2:9-10).

ii. This means that miracles can prove that something is *supernatural*, but they cannot prove that something is *true*.

iii. These Egyptian magicians were intelligent, learned men; but they lacked the wisdom of God, as Paul observes concerning them in 2Ti. 3:7-9: *Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth:*

men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

c. Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did

not heed them: This was a clear demonstration of God's superior power. Still, Pharaoh hardened his heart and he did it *despite* the evidence, not *because* of it.

i. This also shows God has a sense of humor. Imagine the look on the faces of Pharaoh and the magicians when Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods!

3. (14-18) God sends Moses to warn Pharaoh about the coming of the first plague.

So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. Go to

Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. And you

shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.'" "

a. Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to

let the people go: The first plague - as all the plagues - will come because Pharaoh has

hardened his heart against God and His people.

In mercy, God warned Pharaoh, but Pharaoh in his hardness of heart disregarded the warning.

b. By this you shall know that I am the

LORD: Precisely, God did not plague Egypt because Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go; but because Pharaoh refused to recognize and honor God.

i. Pharaoh sinned against Israel because he sinned against the LORD. If he really recognized and honored the God of Israel, he would have freed the children of Israel. Often our relationships with people are bad because our relationship with God is bad.

4. (19-21) The first plague comes upon Egypt: The Nile turns to blood.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood* and *pitchers of stone*.'" And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants.

And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **That they may become blood:** This is the first of the plagues. There are nine in total (the tenth is the slaying of the firstborn, which is in a class by itself), and they are grouped together in threes. In this structure of threes, the first two plagues only come after warning and a call to repentance; the third plague in each set comes without warning.

b. **All the waters that were in the river**

were turned to blood: Many say the plagues each have a naturalistic explanation. In the case of this first plague, some point out that when the Nile reaches an extremely high flood stage, it collects finely powdered red earth, and this red earth carries organisms that color the water and kill fish. But if this were the cause, how possibly could Pharaoh be impressed?

- i. God may or may not have used natural mechanisms to accomplish these plagues; even if He did, the timing and character of the plagues come from God's hand alone.
- ii. It is important to understand that these plagues were all literal; there is nothing "symbolic" about them. They really happened. This guides our understanding about the plagues in the Book of Revelation; there is no reason to see them as "symbolic" either.

iii. The plagues God brought against Egypt had a definite strategy and purpose. Each of them confronts and attacks a prized Egyptian deity. Not only did they bring punishment against Egypt, the plagues also answered Pharaoh's original question: *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?* (Exo. 5:2) The plagues show the LORD God to be greater than any of the deities of Egypt.

c. All the waters that were in the river

were turned to blood: Specifically, this first plague was directed against the numerous Egyptian river deities. The Nile itself was virtually worshipped as a god by the Egyptians, and the LORD God shows that *He* has complete power over the Nile, not some river god.

- i. The Egyptian god *Khnum* was said to be the guardian of the Nile, and this showed he

was unable to protect his territory. The god *Hapi* was said to be the spirit of the Nile, and was dealt a defeat. The great god

Osiris was thought to have the Nile as his bloodstream - now, he is truly bleeding!

ii. In fact, the Nile itself was worshipped as a god, and we have papyri recording hymns sung in praise of the river.

5. (22-25) The magicians of Egypt copy the miracle.

Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

And Pharaoh turned and went into his house.

Neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

a. **The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:** How could the magicians of Egypt *find* fresh water to make as blood, if all the water had been turned to blood? Seemingly, all the waters directly associated with the Nile had been turned to blood (including its pools and tributaries, and water in vessels drawn from the Nile). Yet water obtained by wells was not plagued: **So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river** . The magicians turned fresh *well water* into blood.

b. **The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:** Bible scholars warmly debate if this is a parlor trick or if these **enchantments** are miracles from Satan's hand.

The evidence seems to lean in favor of them being miracles from Satan's hand.

i. If the magicians of Egypt really wanted to do a miracle, why didn't they turn the bloody river clean again? Because it seems that Satan cannot perform a constructive, cleansing miracle. He can bring supernatural destruction, but not goodness. All they did was make more bloody water!

ii. "Alleviation of human suffering is no part of the programme of the devil or his agents.

That can only come from Jehovah, through

the believing cry of his servants." (Meyer) c. **Pharaoh's heart grew hard . . . Neither**

was his heart moved by this: One way or another, the result in the heart of Pharaoh was the same - he seized upon another opportunity to reject and dishonor the LORD God.

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2 You are to speak everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh that he must release the Israelites from his land. **3** But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and although I will multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt, **4** Pharaoh will not listen to you. I will reach into Egypt and bring out my regiments, my people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. **5** Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I extend my hand over Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them.

6 And Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. **7** Now Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

8 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, **9** "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Do a miracle,' and you say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' it will become a snake."

10 When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, they did so, just as the LORD had commanded them - Aaron threw down his

staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a snake.

11 Then Pharaoh also summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt by their secret arts did the same thing. **12** Each man threw down his staff, and the staffs became snakes. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

13 Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

14 The LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to release the people. **15** Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he goes out to the water. Position yourself to meet him by the edge of the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that was turned into a snake. **16** Tell him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you to say, "Release my people, that they may serve me in the desert!" But until now you have not listened. **17** Thus says the LORD: "By this you will know that I am the LORD: I am going to strike the water of the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned into blood. **18** Fish in the Nile will die, the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will be unable to drink water from the Nile.'"" **19** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over Egypt's waters - over their rivers, over their canals, over their ponds, and over all their reservoirs - so that it becomes blood.' There will be blood everywhere in the land of Egypt, even in wooden and stone containers." **20** Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD had commanded. Moses raised the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile right before the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. **21** When the fish that were in the Nile died, the Nile began to stink, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood everywhere in the land of Egypt! **22** But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts, and so Pharaoh's heart remained hard, and he refused to listen to Moses and Aaron - just as the LORD had predicted. **23**

And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. He did not pay any attention to this. **24** All the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the Nile.

25 Seven full days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

1 (7:26) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Release my people in order that they may serve me!"

Guzik - Exodus 8:1-32

Exodus 8 - Plagues Upon Egypt

A. The second plague: Frogs.

1. (1-4) The warning of the second plague.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls.

And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.'" "

a. **Go to Pharaoh:** In His good mercy God gives Pharaoh another chance at repentance, but Pharaoh will not take it.

b. **I will smite all your territory with frogs:** God threatened a plague of **frogs** for a specific reason. The Egyptian goddess *Heqt* was always pictured with the head of a frog. For this reason frogs were considered sacred and could not be killed. God will show the Egyptians the foolishness of a frog-god!

i. Egyptians worshipped the frog as a female goddess because frogs were common around the Nile, because they reproduced rapidly, and because being amphibians they are part of two worlds, creatures of both

land and water.

2. (5-7) God brings frogs upon the land through Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Egypt do the same.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

a. The frogs came up and covered the land

of Egypt: It's hard to miss God's sense of humor. He shows just how ridiculous it is to

worship a frog-god as He says, "If you want to worship frogs, I'll give you all the frogs you want!"

i. "Though he is the Lord of hosts he has no need of powerful armies, the ministry of

angels, or the thunderbolts of justice to

punish a sinner or a sinful nation; the *frog* or the *fly* in his hands is a sufficient instrument of vengeance." (Clarke) b.

And the magicians did so with their

enchantments, and brought up frogs: The ability of the magicians to do the same **with their enchantments** points to a supernatural power present; this isn't the work of a skilled illusionist, this is occult power at work.

i. For all their occult powers, all the

magicians can do is make *more* frogs! This increases the problem instead of solving it,

yet it gives Pharaoh an excuse to further harden his heart.

3. (8-15) Pharaoh asks Moses for help.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and

said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go,

that they may sacrifice to the LORD." And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that* they may remain in the river only." So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God. And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only." Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

a. Entreat the LORD that He may take

away the frogs: Here, God's previous promise (Exo. 7:1) is fulfilled. Pharaoh will not go to the LORD himself, but he will go to Moses as if he were God.

b. So the LORD did according to the word

of Moses: When Moses prays, God answers - and all the frogs die! The understated description "**the land stank**" gives a hint at how nauseating it was.

c. He hardened his heart: Even when Pharaoh's plea was granted, his heart did not change - **he hardened his heart** - yet Pharaoh did just as God said he would.

B. The third plague: Lice.

1. (16-17) God tells Moses to initiate the plague of lice. So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron,

'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **Stretch out your rod:** This plague comes unannounced. This time God does not show Pharaoh the mercy of a warning and an invitation to repentance.

i. We must never think God is unfair when He does not show mercy. If someone is *totally* fair, they would *never* show mercy.

b. **Struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast:** This plague struck at the heart of all Egyptian worship, especially at their priests. The Egyptian priesthood was extremely scrupulous about hygiene and ritual cleansing and an infestation of lice made them unable to worship their gods.

i. The plague of lice was also upon every **beast**. The gods of Egypt would not receive the sacrifice of lice-infested animals, so this stopped their sacrificial system.
2. (18-19) The magicians of Egypt are unable to duplicate this plague.

Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This *is* the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

a. **Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not:** If these magicians could use occult powers to change a rod into a snake, to turn water into blood, and to summon frogs, why

couldn't they bring forth lice? Because as great as Satan's power is, it is limited - and it comes to its limit rather early.

b. This is the finger of God: When the magicians say this to Pharaoh, it shows they know there is a power greater than their own, yet it is a power that they do not honor and serve.

c. Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them: The hardness of Pharaoh's heart is shown when he will not even heed the analysis of his own advisers. There is no rational reason why he insists on resisting the LORD God.

C. The fourth plague: Flies.

1. (20-23) Moses warns Pharaoh of a plague of flies.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be."

a. Let My people go, that they may serve

Me: There is no record of a specific reply from Pharaoh to this request, but since the plague came, he obviously did not soften his heart towards the LORD God or Israel. Perhaps the reaction isn't described because there was no reaction - perhaps he just ignored Moses'

message.

b. In order that you may know that I am

the Lord in the midst of the land: To coldly ignore God is to communicate our hatred of Him as clearly as if we were to try and kill Him. It is a terrible insult to have God in your midst and to act as if He doesn't matter.

2. (24) The plague of flies comes.

And the LORD did so. Thick swarms *of flies* came into the house of Pharaoh, *into* his servants'

houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms *of flies*.

a. Thick swarms of flies came: Literally, it says God sent *a swarm* (Hebrew, *awrob*) upon Egypt; it does not specify what the swarm is. It may have been a variety of gross insects. Psa.

78:45 says these swarms *devoured them*, and this indicates that there were "biting" insects in the swarm.

b. The land was corrupted because of the

swarms of flies: This shows that the point of this plague was probably the same as the

plague of lice. The Egyptian gods could not be worshipped amidst this uncleanness.

c. Into the house of Pharaoh, into his

servants' houses, and into all the land of

Egypt: God promised (Exo. 8:22) that the land of Goshen, the place where the children of

Israel lived, would be spared this disgusting plague.

3. (25-27) Pharaoh tries to compromise with Moses.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and

said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? We will go three

days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us."

a. **Go, sacrifice to your God in the land:** In this, Pharaoh suggests a compromise, allowing

Israel a holiday for their God, but demanding they stay within the land of Egypt to worship.

This is the natural course of action for politicians but God is no politician. He will strike no bargain with Pharaoh.

b. **If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us?** Moses reminds Pharaoh of the social uproar this would cause, and sticks to the original request, refusing to compromise.

i. We see God building character and strength in Moses. Perhaps when he first appeared before Pharaoh he would have been willing to strike this kind of bargain. Now he really knows that God is control, and he doesn't have to settle for less than the perfect will of God.

4. (28-32) Pharaoh's false repentance.

And Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms *of flies* may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people.

But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the

LORD." So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms *of flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

a. **Intercede for me:** This shows Pharaoh knows exactly who the plagues are coming from, and how they can be stopped (by appealing to the LORD God). Nevertheless, **Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also.**

b. **I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness:** This is a clear promise, and one that Pharaoh did not live up to. We cannot tell if Pharaoh

deliberately lied to Moses or simply changed his mind once the plague of flies was gone.

i. Many people "turn to God" in a time of calamity, and when things get better, almost immediately turn their hearts back in hardness to God. Pharaoh isn't an unusual specimen of humanity; he is a rather typical one.

ii. As we continue in sin, God can allow our hearts to harden. A man doesn't start by gambling away his paycheck; it starts with continuing on in friendly betting, and his heart grows hard. A man doesn't start with unspeakable perversion; it starts with a few magazines, a couple of videos, and his heart grows hard. A woman doesn't start addicted to alcohol; it starts with some social drinking and her heart grows hard.

iii. "The drunkard, the murderer himself, is a man who at first did evil as far as he dared, and afterwards dared to do evil which he would once have shuddered at." (Chadwick)

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2 But if you refuse to release them, then I am going to plague all your territory with frogs. **3** The Nile will swarm

with frogs, and they will come up and go into your house, in your bedroom, and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading troughs. **4** Frogs will come up against you, your people, and all your servants.””” **5** The LORD spoke to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Extend your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals, and over the ponds, and bring the frogs up over the land of Egypt.’” **6** So Aaron extended his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

7 The magicians did the same with their secret arts and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt too.

8 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to the LORD that he may take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will release the people that they may sacrifice to the LORD.” **9** Moses said to Pharaoh, “You may have the honor over me – when shall I pray for you, your servants, and your people, for the frogs to be removed from you and your houses, so that they will be left only in the Nile?” **10** He said, “Tomorrow.” And Moses said, “It will be as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. **11** The frogs will depart from you, your houses, your servants, and your people; they will be left only in the Nile.”

12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD because of the frogs that he had brought on Pharaoh. **13** The LORD did as Moses asked – the frogs died out of the houses, the villages, and the fields. **14** The Egyptians piled them in countless heaps, and the land stank. **15** But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

16 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Extend your staff and strike the dust of the ground, and it will become gnats throughout all the land of Egypt.’” **17** They did so; Aaron extended his hand with his staff, he struck the dust of the

ground, and it became gnats on people and on animals. All the dust of the ground became gnats throughout all the land of Egypt. **18** When the magicians attempted to bring forth gnats by their secret arts, they could not. So there were gnats on people and on animals.

19 The magicians said to Pharaoh, "It is the finger of God!" But Pharaoh's heart remained hard, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

20 The LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and position yourself before Pharaoh as he goes out to the water, and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Release my people that they may serve me! **21** If you do not release my people, then I am going to send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people and in your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground they stand on. **22** But on that day I will mark off the land of Goshen, where my people are staying, so that no swarms of flies will be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of this land. **23** I will put a division between my people and your people. This sign will take place tomorrow.'"" **24** The LORD

did so; a thick swarm of flies came into Pharaoh's house and into the houses of his servants, and throughout the whole land of Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of flies.

25 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." **26** But Moses said, "That would not be the right thing to do, for the sacrifices we make to the LORD our God would be an abomination to the Egyptians. If we make sacrifices that are an abomination to the Egyptians right before their eyes, will they not stone us? **27** We must go on a three-day journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, just as he is telling us."

28 Pharaoh said, "I will release you so that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the desert. Only you must not go

very far. Do pray for me.”

29 Moses said, “I am going to go out from you and pray to the LORD, and the swarms of flies will go away from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow.

Only do not let Pharaoh deal falsely again by not releasing the people to sacrifice to the LORD.” **30** So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD, **31** and the LORD did as Moses asked – he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people.

Not one remained! **32** But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and did not release the people.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and tell him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Release my people that they may serve me!

Guzik - Exodus 9:1-35

Exodus 9 - More Plagues Upon Egypt

A. The fifth plague: Disease on livestock.

1. (1-4) God tells Moses to warn Pharaoh.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the

Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if you refuse to let *them* go, and still hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep; a very severe pestilence. And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all *that* belongs to the children of Israel.'" "

a. **Go in to Pharaoh and tell him:** In mercy, God told Moses to give another warning, so that Pharaoh would have opportunity to repent; but Pharaoh ignores this next opportunity also.

b. **Let My people go, that they may serve**

Me: In this appeal, it is clear that God wants Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go for the sake of the LORD Himself, not even so much for the sake of the children of Israel.

i. We must treat each other well not only for the sake of our fellow brother or sister, but also for the sake of the LORD. We owe it to Him even more than we owe it to them.

2. (5-7) The death of the diseased livestock.

Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying,

"Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead.

But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

a. **All the livestock of Egypt died:** This plague was directed against the Egyptian god

Hathor who was thought to be a mother

goddess was in the form of a cow. In addition, Egyptian religion considered cattle sacred and the cow was often a symbol of fertility. God shows Pharaoh and all of Egypt that He is

mightier than this imagined pagan god.

i. There is a ancient record of a battle the Egyptians lost because their enemies put a herd of cattle in front of their advancing troops. It worked because the Egyptian soldiers would not shoot at the opposing army for fear of accidentally killing the "sacred" cattle.

b. **The Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was**

dead: Moses told Pharaoh that the Israelites would be spared, and he cared enough to confirm this. Nevertheless, he did not change his heart when it was proven that Moses and his God were exactly right.

B. The sixth plague: Boils.

1. (8-10) The plague of boils comes without previous announcement.

So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered *them* toward heaven. And *they* caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.

a. **They caused boils that break out in**

sores on man and beast: As the third plague in this second set of three, this plague comes without warning. This time, God chose to not mercifully give Pharaoh a previous opportunity to turn.

b. **Boils that break out in sores:** The idea behind the ancient Hebrew word for *boil* is "to burn." It has the idea of a swelling, painful, skin inflammation, and as with some of the previous plagues, this one also affects people and animals.

2. (11-12) The effect of the boils on the magicians of Egypt. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. But the LORD

hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

a. **The magicians could not stand before**

Moses because of the boils: This plague was probably directed against the Egyptian god

Imhotep, who was said to be the god of medicine; even those who would be thought of

as closest to the Egyptian gods (the court magicians) were stricken with this plague.

C. The seventh plague: Hail.

1. (13-21) Moses warns Pharaoh and the Egyptians of the plague of hail.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to

him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews:

"Let My people go, that they may serve Me, for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that *there is* none like Me in all the earth. Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth.

But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not

brought home; and they shall die.'" " He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

a. **I will send all My plagues to your very**

heart: In this extended warning, God lets Pharaoh know who is in control. As bad as it has been, it has only been by God's mercy that Pharaoh and Egypt have not been **cut off from the earth**.

b. **That I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the**

earth: In this bold declaration, God tells Pharaoh through Moses that his resistance is being used for God's glory.

i. If Pharaoh thinks he is accomplishing

anything with his resistance against God, he is dead wrong. All his stubborn rebellion will merely glorify the LORD more in the end.

c. Gather your livestock and all that you

have in the field: God invites Pharaoh and the Egyptians to trust Him by recommending precautions before the plague. Some took God's invitation and spared their livestock, but others did not.

2. (22-26) A plague of hail and lightning bringing fire from the heavens.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt; on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, there was no hail.

a. There was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it:

This would have been the most frightening plague thus far. The Egyptians must have believed that the wrath of God poured down from heaven in all severity.

b. The hail struck throughout the whole

land of Egypt: This plague was directed against several Egyptian gods. Notable among them would was *Nut*, the sky goddess.

3. (27-35) Pharaoh falsely repents and his heart grows harder.

And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and

Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD *is* righteous, and my people and I *are* wicked. Entreat the LORD, that there may be no *more* mighty thundering and hail, for *it is* enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth *is* the Lord's. But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God." Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the head and the flax *was* in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they *are* late crops. So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

a. I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and my people and I are

wicked: These are picture perfect words of repentance from Pharaoh, but true repentance

hasn't worked its way into his heart. Pharaoh is grieved at the *consequences* of sin, but not the sin itself.

b. I know that you will not yet fear the

LORD God: Moses' response to Pharaoh shows that he is starting to learn and to discern. Moses knew the promise to touch Pharaoh's firstborn (Exo. 4:22-23) had not yet been fulfilled.

c. He sinned yet more; and he hardened

his heart: Hardening our hearts against God is sin; failing to repent when God graciously

answers our plea is to and to ignore His rich mercy is to sin **yet more**.

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2 For if you refuse to release them and continue holding them, **3** then the hand of the LORD will surely bring a very terrible plague on your livestock in the field, on the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. **4** But the Lord will distinguish between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, and nothing will die of all that the Israelites have.””” **5** The LORD set an appointed time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this in the land.” **6**

And the LORD did this on the next day; all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but of the Israelites’ livestock not one died. **7** Pharaoh sent representatives to investigate, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of Israel had died.

But Pharaoh’s heart remained hard, and he did not release the people.

8 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace, and have Moses throw it into the air while Pharaoh is watching. **9** It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt and will cause boils to break out and fester on both people and animals in all the land of Egypt.”

10 So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh, Moses threw it into the air, and it caused festering boils to break out on both people and animals.

11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. **12** But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted to Moses.

13 The LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, stand before Pharaoh, and tell him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews: “Release my people so that they may serve me! **14** For this time I will send all my plagues on your very self and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. **15** For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck

you and your people with plague, and you would have been destroyed from the earth. **16** But for this purpose I have caused you to stand: to show you my strength, and so that my name may be declared in all the earth. **17** You are still exalting yourself against my people by not releasing them. **18** I am going to cause very severe hail to rain down about this time tomorrow, such hail as has never occurred in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. **19** So now, send instructions to gather your livestock and all your possessions in the fields to a safe place. Every person or animal caught in the field and not brought into the house – the hail will come down on them, and they will die!”””

20 Those of Pharaoh’s servants who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their servants and livestock into the houses, **21** but those who did not take the word of the LORD seriously left their servants and their cattle in the field.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Extend your hand toward the sky that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on people and on animals, and on everything that grows in the field in the land of Egypt.” **23** When Moses extended his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire fell to the earth; so the LORD caused hail to rain down on the land of Egypt. **24** Hail fell and fire mingled with the hail; the hail was so severe that there had not been any like it in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. **25** The hail struck everything in the open fields, both people and animals, throughout all the land of Egypt. The hail struck everything that grows in the field, and it broke all the trees of the field to pieces. **26** Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was there no hail.

27 So Pharaoh sent and summoned Moses and Aaron and said to them, “I have sinned this time! The LORD is righteous, and I and my people are guilty. **28** Pray to the LORD, for the mighty thunderings and hail are too much! I will release you and you will stay no longer.”

29 Moses said to him, "When I leave the city I will spread my hands to the LORD, the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth belongs to the LORD. **30** But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God."

31 (Now the flax and the barley were struck by the hail, for the barley had ripened and the flax was in bud. **32** But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are later crops.) **33** So Moses left Pharaoh, went out of the city, and spread out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain stopped pouring on the earth.

34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder ceased, he sinned again: both he and his servants hardened their hearts. **35** So Pharaoh's heart remained hard, and he did not release the Israelites, as the LORD had predicted through Moses.

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order to display these signs of mine before him, Guzik - Exodus 10:1-29

Exodus 10 - The Plagues Continue

A. The eighth plague: Locusts.

1. (1-6) God tells Moses to bring another warning to Pharaoh.

Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I *am* the LORD." So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD

God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your

territory. And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.' " And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

a. **I have hardened his heart:** Here the LORD says that He **hardened** Pharaoh's heart, yet in Exo. 9:34 it says that *he* [Pharaoh] *hardened his heart*. Which was true? Both are true, and one does not deny the other. In hardening Pharaoh's heart, God allowed him to have what he sinfully desired - a hard heart.

b. **That you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt:** God's work was not only for the sake of the generation of Moses and Pharaoh; it was also for **your son and your son's son**. God does mighty works among us so that we can encourage generations to come.

c. **How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?** Getting to the heart of the matter, God warns Pharaoh to **humble** himself or the worst plague of locusts ever seen will come upon Egypt. *Pride* was at the heart of Pharaoh's problem; he simply didn't want to give into God.

2. (7-11) Pharaoh seems to relent - with qualifications.

Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?" So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God.

Who *are* the ones that are going?" And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD." Then he said to them, "The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. Not so! Go now, you *who are* men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired."

And they were driven out from Pharaoh's

presence.

a. **How long shall this man be a snare to us?** These men, known as **Pharaoh's**

servants hardened their hearts before (Exo.

9:34). Still now, even *they* relent in light of the destruction that has come upon Egypt - but Pharaoh's heart is harder still!

b. **Who are the ones that are going?**

Pharaoh again wants to bargain with God and Moses. He wants to allow some to go into the wilderness to worship, but keep the women and children home as hostages.

i. Pharaoh offered a compromise in Exo.

8:25-26, suggesting that they could have a day to sacrifice to the LORD while still in

Egypt. Moses rejected that compromise, and

will reject this one also. God won't strike this bargain, because He doesn't need to - God holds all the negotiating leverage.

ii. What Pharaoh wanted is what many of us

want in the flesh - a way to "give in" to God, without fully submitting to Him. Sometimes

we look for a way to sort of bargain with

God as an equal, instead of submitting to Him as Creator and LORD.

iii. When Moses first came to Pharaoh,

Pharaoh said: *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?* (Exo.

5:2). The fact that Pharaoh still will not

submit to the LORD shows that he doesn't

know who the LORD is yet. This is despite

the fact that the LORD God has made it

clear that He is:

- Greater than the god *Khnum*

(the guardian of the Nile)

- Greater than the god *Hapi*

(the spirit of the Nile)

- Greater than the god *Osiris*

(who had the Nile as his
bloodstream)

- Greater than the goddess

Heqt (the frog-goddess of
fertility)

- Greater than the goddess

Hathor (a cow-like mother
goddess)

- Greater than the god

Imhotep (the god of medicine)

- Greater than *Nut* (the sky

goddess)

- Able to stop the whole

worship of the Egyptian gods

with loathsome lice and

swarms of insects

iv. Despite all this, Pharaoh shows he still

does not know the LORD God. Very well,

God will show him more!

3. (12-15) The plague of locusts comes.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land; all that the hail has left."

So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on

the land all that day and all *that* night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt.

They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the

fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **They ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had**

left: Now the LORD God shows Himself greater than the Egyptian god *Seth*, thought to be the protector of crops.

b. **There remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field:** God did for Pharaoh what He will do in our lives: expose and topple every false god. When trust in these gods it hurts to see them fall, but it is always best to have them exposed.

4. (16-20) Another false repentance by Pharaoh.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only." So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a

very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

a. **I have sinned against the LORD your**

God and against you: Pharaoh did the same thing in Exo. 9:27-28. He said the words of repentance but did not follow through with the actions. His heart was only hardened more after God relented and showed mercy.

B. The ninth plague: Darkness.

1. (21-23) A plague of darkness comes without warning.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt,

darkness *which* may even be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

a. **Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt:**

As was the pattern with the previous plagues, the third in this set of three comes without warning.

b. **Darkness which may even be felt:** This was no normal darkness, it had a supernatural element to it that could **be felt**. Light is not only a physical property; it is an aspect of God's character (*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*, 1Jo. 1:5). In judgment, God can withdraw His presence so significantly that the void remaining is **darkness which may even be felt**.

i. Seemingly, God did not even allow artificial light sources to work. The Egyptians would attempt to use candles and lamps but were unable to produce light. This was dramatic show of greatness over the prominent Egyptian god *Ra*, thought to be the sun god.

c. **All the children of Israel had light in their dwellings:**

We don't know if this was because God spared them the plague or because God granted them His unique presence, bringing a supernatural light.

2. (24-29) Pharaoh's last attempt at a compromise with Moses.

Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you." But Moses said, "You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind.

For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there." But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!" And Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."

a. **Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back:** With this, Pharaoh makes his "final offer" to Moses. All the children of Israel can go into the wilderness for three days of sacrifice unto the LORD God, but they must leave their livestock behind.

i. Undoubtedly, Pharaoh felt God was a hard bargainer and made the best deal for Himself He could. Pharaoh still saw things as someone who thinks he can bargain with the Creator - he still doesn't really know who the LORD God is, because He still has not submitted to Him.

b. **Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more!** In exasperation, Pharaoh orders Moses out - telling him to never come back. Moses assured Pharaoh, "**You have spoken well. I will never see your face again**" - but this was not good news for Pharaoh.

i. This ends the account of the nine plagues, and though there is one yet to come - the plague upon the firstborn - it is so unique that it must be considered by itself. As review, we see the Bible tells us there are several reasons why God sent these plagues upon Pharaoh and Egypt.

· To answer Pharaoh's question, *Who is the LORD?* (Exo. 5:2). In the plagues, God showed Himself greater than any of

the false gods of Egypt

- To show the power of God through Moses (Exo. 9:16)
- To give a testimony to the children of Israel for future generations (Exo. 10:2)
- To judge the false gods - demons, really - of Egypt (Exo. 12:12, Num. 33:4)
- To warn the nations - more than 400 years later, the Philistines remembered the LORD God of Israel as the one who plagued the Egyptians (1Sa. 4:8)
- As a testimony of the greatness of God to Israel (Exo. 15:11, Deu. 4:34)

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** and in order that in the hearing of your son and your grandson you may tell how I made fools of the Egyptians and about my signs that I displayed among them, so that you may know that I am the LORD."

3 So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and told him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews: 'How long do you refuse to humble yourself before me? Release my people so that they may serve me! **4** But if you refuse to release my people, I am going to bring locusts into your territory tomorrow. **5** They will cover the surface of the earth, so that you will be unable to see the ground. They will eat the remainder of what escaped - what is left over for you - from the hail, and they will eat every tree that grows for you from the field. **6** They will fill your houses, the houses of your servants, and all the houses of Egypt, such as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen since they have been in the land until this day!'"

Then Moses turned and went out from Pharaoh.

7 Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a menace to us? Release the people so that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not know that Egypt is destroyed?"

8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God.

Exactly who is going with you?" **9** Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, and with our sheep and our cattle we will go, because we are to hold a pilgrim feast for the LORD."

10 He said to them, "The LORD will need to be with you if I release you and your dependents! Watch out! Trouble is right in front of you!" **11** No! Go, you men only, and serve the LORD, for that is what you want." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

12 The LORD said to Moses, "Extend your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up over the land of Egypt and eat everything that grows in the ground, everything that the hail has left." **13** So Moses extended his staff over the land of Egypt, and then the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all night. The morning came, and the east wind had brought up the locusts! **14** The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and settled down in all the territory of Egypt. It was very severe; there had been no locusts like them before, nor will there be such ever again. **15** They covered the surface of all the ground, so that the ground became dark with them, and they ate all the vegetation of the ground and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green remained on the trees or on anything that grew in the fields throughout the whole land of Egypt.

16

Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you!

17 So now, forgive my sin this time only, and pray to the LORD your God that he would only take this death away from me." **18** Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD, **19** and the LORD turned a very strong west wind, and it picked up the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea. Not one locust remained in all the territory of Egypt. **20** But

the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not release the Israelites.

21 The LORD said to Moses, "Extend your hand toward heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness so thick it can be felt."

22 So Moses extended his hand toward heaven, and there was absolute darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. **23** No one could see another person, and no one could rise from his place for three days. But the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

24 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD - only your flocks and herds will be detained. Even your families may go with you."

25 But Moses said, "Will you also provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings that we may present them to the LORD our God? **26** Our livestock must also go with us!

Not a hoof is to be left behind! For we must take these animals to serve the LORD our God. Until we arrive there, we do not know what we must use to serve the LORD."

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to release them. **28** Pharaoh said to him, "Go from me! Watch out for yourself! Do not appear before me again, for when you see my face you will die!" **29** Moses said, "As you wish! I will not see your face again."

1 The LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that he will release you from this place. When he releases you, he will drive you out completely from this place.

Guzik - Exodus 11:1-10

Exodus 11 - God Announces the Death of the Firstborn

A. God's instructions to Moses concerning the final calamity.

1. (1-3) Israel plunders the Egyptians.

And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring yet one *more* plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt.

Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets *you* go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold." And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

Moreover the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

a. He will surely drive you out of here

altogether: After the final plague - which Moses knew had to do with the death of the firstborn in Egypt (Exo. 4:21-23) - Pharaoh wouldn't merely allow Israel to leave, he would *compel* them to go.

b. The LORD gave the people favor in the

sight of the Egyptians: Pharaoh was still not quite convinced, but the people of Egypt were willing to see Israel go right away - and were more than willing to give them gifts of silver and gold to persuade them to leave. This was how the slaves of Israel received their "back wages" from their time of slavery, and how they did not leave Egypt empty-handed.

c. The man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people:

Though Pharaoh's heart was not yet persuaded, all of Egypt - including **Pharaoh's servants** - knew the LORD God was greater than the gods of Egypt and that Moses was a servant of this great God.

2. (4-8) The death of the firstborn is announced to Pharaoh. Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female

servant who *is* behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it *before*, nor shall be like it again.

But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' And all these your servants shall come down to me

and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, and all the people who follow you!' After that I will go out." Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

a. **Then Moses said:** Moses is still in the presence of Pharaoh; and for the first time, God lead him to specifically say what will happen to the firstborn of Egypt - they **shall die**, all of them, because the Egyptians would not let God's firstborn (Israel) go.

b. **Against none of the children of Israel**

shall a dog move its tongue: Despite the great calamity to come, God will grant the Egyptians the ability to see the situation as it really is - the fault of their own Pharaoh, not of Moses or the children of Israel.

i. This was even worse news to Pharaoh. A politician doesn't mind calamity if he can blame it on someone else. Here, God promised that Pharaoh himself will bear the blame.

c. **All these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, and all the people who follow you!'**

Moses' final words to Pharaoh let him know that he and the rest of the Egyptians will command the people of Israel to go.

3. (9-10) God tells Moses that Pharaoh will still not heed.

But the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not heed you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD

hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

a. **Pharaoh will not heed you:** If nine plagues had come from the hand of God, one might expect that the warning about a tenth plague would be believed; but Pharaoh's heart remains hard, and God strengthens Pharaoh in his hardness of heart.

b. **He did not let the children of Israel go out of his land:** Again, Pharaoh is more typical than unusual; how many warnings from God have we ignored?

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Instruct the people that each man and each woman is to request from his or her neighbor items of silver and gold."

3 (Now the LORD granted the people favor with the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, respected by Pharaoh's servants and by the Egyptian people.) **4** Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt, **5** and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. **6**

There will be a great cry throughout the whole land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. **7** But against any of the Israelites not even a dog will bark against either people or animals, so that you may know that the LORD distinguishes between Egypt and Israel.' **8** All these your servants will come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you,' and

after that I will go out.” Then Moses went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

9 The LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”

10 So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not release the Israelites from his land.

1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,
Guzik - Exodus 12:1-51

Exodus 12 - God Institutes Passover

A. Passover instructions.

1. (1-6) Each household should take a lamb.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats.

Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.’”

a. **This month shall be your beginning of**

months: The coming deliverance from Egypt is such a significant act that God tells the children of Israel to remake their calendar - the new year will now start with the month of their

redemption from Egypt.

b. **Every man shall take for himself a lamb:** On the tenth of this first month, each family - or household - is to

take a lamb, and the lamb is to live with the family for the four days until Passover.

i. In this way, the lamb became part of the family. By the time it was sacrificed on the fourteenth it was cherished and mourned; God wanted the sacrifice of something precious.

ii. **If the household is too small for the lamb:** The rabbis later determined that there should be at least ten people for each Passover lamb, and not more than twenty.

c. **Your lamb shall be without blemish:** The lamb was also to be **without blemish**; this sacrifice unto the LORD had to be as perfect as a lamb could be.

d. **You may take it from the sheep or from the goats:** This may sound confusing, but the Hebrew word for **lamb** can refer to either a young sheep or a young goat.

i. "The Hebrew *seh* is quite a neutral word and should be translated 'head of (small)

stock', applying equally to sheep and goats

of any age. The Hebrews, like the Chinese,

seem to have regarded any distinction

between sheep and goats as a minor

subdivision. Probably because of this, to

'separate the sheep from the goats' is

proverbial of God's discernment in New

Testament times (Mat. 25:32)." (Cole)

2. (7-11) Instructions for eating the Passover.

'And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with

unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire; its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning

you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand.

So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the Lord's Passover.'

a. **Take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the**

houses: Before the Passover lamb could be eaten, its blood had to be applied to the

doorway of the home, to the top and upon each

side the blood was applied. The only part of this sacrifice given to God was the blood; the rest was eaten by each family or discarded (**what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire**).

i. As the blood was applied to the top and each side of the doorway, this blood dripped down, forming a figure of a cross in the doorway.

b. **And thus you shall eat it:** Then, the lamb could be eaten - but only if it had been **roasted in fire**, with the lamb itself coming into contact with the fire, and with **bitter herbs** accompanying the meal.

i. As our Passover sacrifice, Jesus had to come into direct contact with the "**fire**" of the Father's judgment on our behalf, and the bitterness of the cross is reflected in the **bitter herbs**.

c. **Let none of it remain until morning:** The Passover lamb had to be eaten completely; a family had to totally consume the sacrifice.

d. **With a belt on your waist, your sandals**

on your feet, and your staff in your hand: The Passover lamb had to be eaten in faith, trusting that the deliverance promised to Israel was present, and that they would walk in that deliverance immediately.

i. Faith was essential to the keeping of

Passover: *By faith he [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.* (Heb. 11:28)

3. (12-13) The protection of the blood.

'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.'

a. **When I see the blood, I will pass over**

you: For Israel to be spared the judgment on the firstborn, they had to apply to blood just as God said they should. The blood of the lamb was essential to what God required.

i. If an Israelite home *didn't* believe in the power of **the blood** of the lamb, they could sacrifice the lamb and eat it, but they would still be visited by judgment.

ii. If an Egyptian home *did* believe in the power of **the blood** of the lamb, and made a proper Passover sacrifice, they would be spared the judgment.

iii. Additionally, an intellectual agreement with what God said about **the blood** was not enough; they actually had to *do* what God said must be done with the blood.

b. **I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt:**

The judgment on the firstborn was a powerful act of God, because the firstborn was always considered favored and privileged before God. If God judges the firstborn, then what of the rest of us?

4. (14-20) The institution of Passover and Unleavened Bread as feasts.

'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you

shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat; that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'

a. Seven days you shall eat unleavened

bread: Passover began on the tenth; on the 14th they ate the Passover, and this was the first day of unleavened bread; then for the next seven days, they ate only unleavened bread.

b. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the

land of Egypt: For the first Passover, the unleavened bread was a practical necessity -

they left Egypt in such a hurry there was no time to allow for the dough to rise. After the first Passover, the **Feast of Unleavened**

Bread was a testimony **throughout your generations.**

c. For seven days no leaven shall be found

in your houses: Leaven was also a picture of sin and corruption, because of the way a little leaven influences a

whole lump of dough, and also because of the way leaven "puffs up" the lump - even as pride and sin makes us "puffed up."

i. Significantly, God called them to walk "unleavened" after their initial deliverance from Egypt. Symbolically, they were being called to a pure walk with the LORD.

ii. Some suggest there was also a hygienic aspect in getting rid of all the leaven. Since they used a piece of dough from the previous batch to make the bread for that day, and did so repeatedly, that harmful bacteria could take hold in the dough - so it was good to remove all leaven and start all over at least once a year.

B. Moses leads the people in the observance of Passover.

1. (21-23) Moses tells the elders to do as God said.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb*. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you*."

a. **Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them:** The elders were expected to lead the way. Moses instructs them to observe the Passover, knowing the rest of the nation will follow.

b. **Take a bunch of hyssop:** They used this to apply the blood to the doorposts and the lintel.

Through the Scriptures, hyssop is often used to apply blood for the cleansing of sin.

i. In Lev. 14:6, the ceremony for the cleansing of a leper used **hyssop** to apply blood. In Num. 19:6 **hyssop** was used for to make the ashes of a red heifer for the water of purification. In Num. 19:18 **hyssop** was used to apply the purification water.

ii. **Hyssop** was even connected with Jesus' great sacrifice for sin. Joh. 19:29 points out when Jesus was offered sour wine to drink on the cross, the sponge soaked with it was put on a bunch of **hyssop**.

iii. This is why David, in his great Psalm of repentance, says *purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean* (Psa. 51:7). **Hyssop** was always connected with purification through sacrifice.

c. **When He sees the blood . . . the LORD will pass over:** The LORD looked for blood.

This blood sacrifice was the basis for sparing people from judgment.

i. Salvation wasn't accomplished with a prayer or a fasting or a good work; it was accomplished by a life given on behalf of others.

2. (24-27a) Passover as an enduring ordinance.

"And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD

will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' that you shall say, 'It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'"

a. **An ordinance for you and your sons**

forever: The deliverance of Passover was not only for them, but for their children, and all generations to follow. Passover was the greatest work of redemption performed on the Old Testament side of the cross.

i. In the same way Jesus gave the "new" Passover, saying that His work on the cross was not only for that generation, but should be remembered and applied to all generations (Luk. 22:14-20).

b. **When He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households:** In Passover, there was a two-fold work. First, an enemy was defeated (**He struck the Egyptians**). Second, God's people were set free and given a new identity, with new promises, a new walk, a new life all together (**delivered our households**).

3. (27b-28) The obedience of the people.

So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Then the children of Israel went away and did *so*; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

a. **Then the children of Israel went away and did so:** In many ways these are the most important words of the whole account. As great as God's deliverance was, the people would never receive it if they failed to do what God told them to do. How many Israelites suffered under the judgment of the firstborn because they *did not* believe and obey? How many Egyptians were spared judgment because they *did* believe and obey?

b. Their obedience was connected with worship: **So the people bowed their heads and worshipped. Then the children of Israel went away and did so.**

i. Worship can help with our obedience because it gets things in the right place between God and us. He is the Creator, we

are creatures, and we humbly worship Him.

C. The final plague: the death of Egypt's firstborn.

1. (29-30) God slays the firstborn of Egypt.

And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who *was* in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

a. **The LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt:** God told Moses that Pharaoh would not let them go until he was forced to by God's mighty works (Exo. 3:19-20), and that this work would somehow touch the firstborn of Egypt (Exo. 4:21-23). Now the situation unfolds just as God said it would.

b. **All the firstborn in the land of Egypt:** This plague was directed against two significant Egyptian gods. First, *Osiris* was the Egyptian god thought to be the giver of life. Second, against the supposed deity of Pharaoh himself, because his own household was touched (**the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne**).

i. An inscription was found in a shrine connected with the great Sphinx that records a solemn promise from the Egyptian gods vowing that Thutmose IV would succeed his father Amenhotep II - whom many believe to be the pharaoh of the Exodus. Why did they make such a unique, emphatic promise from the gods that something so natural would happen - the eldest son take his father's place as Pharaoh? Undoubtedly, because Thutmose IV was not his father's firstborn son, and the firstborn was struck dead at the first Passover. Therefore, they

believed that the second born son needed special protection from the gods and the inscription seeks to provide that.

c. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt:

In dealing with Pharaoh, God first had to inform his mind, and then break his will. Pharaoh's problem wasn't that there was insufficient intellectual evidence; his heart had to be broken and made soft

towards God.

i. Egypt and Pharaoh would not give God *His* firstborn - Israel (Exo. 4:22-23); so God took the firstborn of Egypt.

ii. Pharaoh once asked, "*Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?*

I do not know the LORD." (Exo. 5:2) Now he knows that the LORD God is greater than all

the Egyptian gods, and greater than Pharaoh himself - who was thought to be a god.

2. (31-36) The response of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also." And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "*We shall all be dead.*" So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing.

And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested*. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

a. Rise, go out from among my people:

Pharaoh isn't "letting" Israel leave; now he commands them!

This is just what the LORD

told Moses would happen: *When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether* (Exo. 11:1).

b. Bless me also: This shows that now, Pharaoh knows who the LORD is, the God who is greater than Pharaoh and whom Pharaoh must seek for blessing. Pharaoh only came to this knowledge through being broken.

c. Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste . . . they plundered the Egyptians:

The Egyptian people also agreed that the Israelites must go, to the extent that they essentially *paid* the Israelites to leave.

Therefore, the children of Israel left in a hurry, so quickly there was no time to let the bread rise. This is why they had to eat unleavened bread as the LORD had commanded.

i. We can imagine that some of the Israelites did not follow God's instruction to get all the leaven out (Exo. 12:15). Now because of the haste of their departure they *had* to do what God had told them because God arranged the circumstances so that they couldn't use leaven.

ii. In the same way, sometimes God arranges circumstances to where obedience is simply made necessary - even if we would not normally choose it. For example, God may want a man to give up friends that bring a bad influence and the man finds that his friends leave him first.

D. Israel leaves Egypt.

1. (37-39) The children of Israel go out of Egypt.

Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds; a great deal of livestock. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

a. The children of Israel journeyed:

Assembling together at Succoth, about 600,000 men (besides children of women) left Egypt.

The count of **six hundred thousand men** makes for a total population of perhaps two million that left Egypt for the Promised Land.

b. A mixed multitude went up with them: Not all of the 600,000 were Israelites. Many Egyptians (and perhaps other foreigners) went with them, because the God of Israel demonstrated that He was more powerful than the gods of the Egyptians.

c. It was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait: Again, God made obedience a necessity in the case of the unleavened bread.

2. (40-42) Passover as a solemn observance.

Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt *was* four hundred and thirty years.

And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years; on that very same day; it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It *is* a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This *is* that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

a. It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the

land of Egypt: God intended this event to be as a memorial of His redemptive work for Israel.

In this sense, the deliverance from Egypt is the "Calvary" of the Old Testament.

b. **Out from the land of Egypt:** The phrase **out of Egypt** is repeated 56 times in the Bible after this point. God wants His people to remember His deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

3. (43-49) Regulations for Passover.

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This *is* the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land.

For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."

a. **No foreigner shall eat it:** To share in the Passover, one had to make themselves part of the people of Israel. Receiving the covenant of circumcision and taking Passover were all part of the same package.

b. **In one house it shall be eaten:** Passover was commemorated on a family level. It was celebrated by each household.

c. **Nor shall you break one of its bones:** None of the bones of the Passover lamb were to be broken. This looks forward to Jesus, the ultimate Passover Lamb, who had not one bone

broken even in His crucifixion (Psa. 22:17, Joh. 19:31-36).

d. **All the congregation of Israel shall keep it:** All who were part of Israel had to commemorate the Passover

redemption. You couldn't be part of God's people and not partake of Passover. In this sense, Passover means much to us as Christians: *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1Co. 5:7-8).

4. (50-51) Departure from Egypt: the Exodus begins.

Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

a. The LORD brought the children of Israel

out of the land of Egypt: When Israel left Egypt, it was a nation born in a day. It was as if the 430 years were a time in gestation when the baby grew large. The plagues were like labor pains before birth and now the nation is born.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "This month is to be your beginning of months; it will be your first month of the year. **3** Tell the whole community of Israel, 'In the tenth day of this month they each must take a lamb for themselves according to their families - a lamb for each household. **4** If any household is too small for a lamb, the man and his next-door neighbor are to take a lamb according to the number of people - you will make your count for the lamb according to how much each one can eat. **5** Your lamb must be perfect, a male, one year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. **6** You must care for it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then the whole community of Israel will kill it around sundown. **7** They will take some of the blood and

put it on the two side posts and top of the doorframe of the houses where they will eat it. **8** They will eat the meat the same night; they will eat it roasted over the fire with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. **9** Do not eat it raw or boiled in water, but roast it over the fire with its head, its legs, and its entrails. **10** You must leave nothing until morning, but you must burn with fire whatever remains of it until morning. **11** This is how you are to eat it – dressed to travel, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in haste. It is the LORD'S Passover.

12 I will pass through the land of Egypt in the same night, and I will attack all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both of humans and of animals, and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the LORD. **13** The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, so that when I see the blood I will pass over you, and this plague will not fall on you to destroy you when I attack the land of Egypt.

14 This day will become a memorial for you, and you will celebrate it as a festival to the LORD – you will celebrate it perpetually as a lasting ordinance. **15** For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. Surely on the first day you must put away yeast from your houses because anyone who eats bread made with yeast from the first day to the seventh day will be cut off from Israel.

16 On the first day there will be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there will be a holy convocation for you. You must do no work of any kind on them, only what every person will eat – that alone may be prepared for you. **17** So you will keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because on this very day I brought your regiments out from the land of Egypt, and so you must keep this day perpetually as a lasting ordinance. **18** In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, you will eat bread made without yeast until the twenty-first day of the month in the evening. **19** For seven days yeast must not be found in your houses, for whoever eats what is made with yeast – that

person will be cut off from the community of Israel, whether a foreigner or one born in the land. **20** You will not eat anything made with yeast; in all the places where you live you must eat bread made without yeast.”

21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel, and told them, “Go and select for yourselves a lamb or young goat for your families, and kill the Passover animals. **22**

Take a branch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply to the top of the doorframe and the two side posts some of the blood that is in the basin. Not one of you is to go out the door of his house until morning. **23**

For the LORD will pass through to strike Egypt, and when he sees the blood on the top of the doorframe and the two side posts, then the LORD will pass over the door, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. **24**

You must observe this event as an ordinance for you and for your children forever. **25** When you enter the land that the

LORD will give to you, just as he said, you must observe this ceremony. **26** When your children ask you, ‘What does this

ceremony mean to you?’ – **27** then you will say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover, when he passed over the

houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck Egypt and delivered our households.’” The people bowed down low to

the ground, **28** and the Israelites went away and did exactly as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

29 It happened at midnight – the LORD attacked all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh

who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the prison, and all the firstborn of the cattle. **30** Pharaoh

got up in the night, along with all his servants and all Egypt, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no house in

which there was not someone dead. **31** Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, “Get up, get out from

among my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, serve the LORD as you have requested! **32** Also, take your flocks and

your herds, just as you have requested, and leave. But bless me also.”

33 The Egyptians were urging the people on, in order to send them out of the land quickly, for they were saying, “We are all dead!” **34** So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, with their kneading troughs bound up in their clothing on their shoulders. **35** Now the Israelites had done as Moses told them – they had requested from the Egyptians silver and gold items and clothing. **36** The LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they gave them whatever they wanted, and so they plundered Egypt.

37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Sukkoth. There were about 600,000 men on foot, plus their dependants. **38** A mixed multitude also went up with them, and flocks and herds – a very large number of cattle. **39** They baked cakes of bread without yeast using the dough they had brought from Egypt, for it was made without yeast – because they were thrust out of Egypt and were not able to delay, they could not prepare food for themselves either.

40 Now the length of time the Israelites lived in Egypt was 430 years. **41** At the end of the 430 years, on the very day, all the regiments of the LORD went out of the land of Egypt.

42 It was a night of vigil for the LORD to bring them out from the land of Egypt, and so on this night all Israel is to keep the vigil to the LORD for generations to come.

43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover. No foreigner may share in eating it. **44** But everyone’s servant who is bought for money, after you have circumcised him, may eat it. **45** A foreigner and a hired worker must not eat it. **46** It must be eaten in one house; you must not bring any of the meat outside the house, and you must not break a bone of it. **47**

The whole community of Israel must observe it.

48 “When a foreigner lives with you and wants to observe the Passover to the LORD, all his males must be circumcised,

and then he may approach and observe it, and he will be like one who is born in the land – but no uncircumcised person may eat of it. **49** The same law will apply to the person who is native-born and to the foreigner who lives among you.”

50 So all the Israelites did exactly as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. **51** And on this very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by their regiments.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

Guzik - Exodus 13:1-22

Exodus 13 - God's Instruction to Israel upon Their Departure

A. Instructions for a new nation.

1. (1-2) The firstborn belongs to God.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

"Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine."

a. **Consecrate to Me:** The idea is that the firstborn was to be set apart to God, whether **of man** or **beast** - the firstborn belonged to God.

b. **It is Mine:** This was for three reasons. First, because Israel was God's firstborn (Exo. 4:22), and this honored that fact. Second, because the firstborn was thought to be the best, and the best was always given to God. Finally, as a reminder to all generations of when God redeemed Israel, His firstborn.

2. (3-7) The feast of Unleavened Bread.

And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place*. No leavened bread shall be eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which

He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *there shall be* a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters."

a. Seven days you shall eat unleavened

bread: The purity of the feast of Unleavened Bread followed upon the blood-deliverance of Passover. This illustrates the principle that we can only walk in purity before the LORD after the blood-deliverance at the cross.

b. And on the seventh day there shall be a

feast to the LORD: At the same time, the days of Unleavened Bread were not joyless. The time began and ended with **a feast** - a party. A walk of purity in the LORD is a life filled with joy.

3. (8-10) Remember to tell your children why you do these things.

"And you shall tell your son in that day, saying,

'This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.'*' It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year."*

a. It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes: God wanted the deliverance from Egypt to be constantly at hand and before their eyes. The

Jews used this passage to institute the practice the wearing of phylacteries - small boxes

holding parchment with scriptures on them, held to the forehead or hand with leather straps.

- i. Later, Jesus condemned abuse of the wearing of phylacteries among the Pharisees. They made their phylactery boxes large and ostentatious as a display of greater spirituality (Mat. 23:5).
- ii. In the end times there will be a Satanic imitation of this practice when the number of the Antichrist will be applied to either the hand or forehead of all who will take it (Rev. 13:16).

b. That the LORD's law may be in your

mouth: This shows that God did not command for literal boxes to be tied to the hands and forehead, because to take in this way means that there should also be a phylactery box to put in the mouth.

4. (11-16) How and why to give the firstborn to the LORD.

"And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the Lord's. But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is* this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD

brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 'And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast.

Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' It shall be

as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

a. **When the LORD brings you into the land**

of the Canaanites: This law was only to take effect when in the Promised Land. By then the need for a reminder of the work of deliverance from Egypt would be all the more necessary.

b. **But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb . . . And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem:**

If the firstborn was unacceptable to sacrifice (an unclean animal or a human) a substitute was offered to **redeem** the firstborn from God. If the firstborn was an animal the substitute was a clean animal. If the firstborn was a human, the substitute was money.

B. Israel's journey out of Egypt.

1. (17-18) God leads them out in the way less expected, by the wilderness.

Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by way* of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." So God led the people around *by way* of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

a. **God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was**

near: The coastal route (the *Via Maris*, known as "the way of the sea") was the shortest and most common way to go. Still, it was also the road where Egypt's military outposts were. God knew the people of Israel were not ready to face this yet (**lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt**), so He led them a different way.

i. It would have been easy for the Israelites to think that the Via Maris was the way to go; it had good, easy roads, the shortest distance, it was a trade route so food and water could be bought. But the dangers of the way were too great, even though they could not see them. The same is true of our walk with God; a way that seems right to us may turn out to be full of danger we can't even think of.

ii. In the same way, God will never allow us to face more than we are able to bear; He knows what we can handle (1Co. 10:13).

b. By way of the wilderness of the Red

Sea: The **Red Sea** first mentioned here is not the huge expanse of the Red Sea (some 100 miles wide), but the western "finger" of the Red Sea that extends up unto the border areas of Egypt - the modern day Gulf of Suez.

2. (19) The promise to Joseph fulfilled.

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

a. Moses took the bones of Joseph with

him: In a great act of faith Joseph asked that his bones be taken from Egypt. He did this because he knew that Egypt was not their final resting place, but that God had a Promised Land for them.

b. God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you: Gen. 50:25-26 says specifically that Joseph was never buried. His coffin laid above ground for the four hundred or so years until it was taken back to Canaan. It was a silent witness all those years that Israel *was* going back to the Promised Land, just as God had said - now the promise was being fulfilled.

3. (20-22) Israel led by the cloud by day and the fire by night.

So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness.

And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

a. **The LORD went before them:** what more can we ask for than this? God showed His presence to Israel in a dramatic way, by giving them "24-hour-a-day" assurance, with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

i. The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night was also there as a sun and a shield:

He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night (Psa. 105:39); or as it says in Psa. 84:11: For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.

b. **A pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light:** The ancient Hebrew for **pillar** literally means "something standing." It was probably more of what we would think of as a "column" than a pillar.

c. **He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people:** We often think that such miraculous assurance would make us never

doubt the LORD again, but Israel certainly did - and so would we.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "Set apart to me every firstborn male - the first offspring of every womb among the Israelites, whether human or animal; it is mine."

3 Moses said to the people, “Remember this day on which you came out from Egypt, from the place where you were enslaved, for the LORD brought you out of there with a mighty hand – and no bread made with yeast may be eaten.

4 On this day, in the month of Abib, you are going out. **5** When the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, then you will keep this ceremony in this month. **6** For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, and on the seventh day there is to be a festival to the LORD. **7** Bread made without yeast must be eaten for seven days; no bread made with yeast shall be seen among you, and you must have no yeast among you within any of your borders.

8 You are to tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ **9** It will be a sign for you on your hand and a memorial on your forehead, so that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth, for with a mighty hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. **10** So you must keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.

11 When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, **12** then you must give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. Every firstling of a beast that you have – the males will be the LORD’s. **13** Every firstling of a donkey you must redeem with a lamb, and if you do not redeem it, then you must break its neck. Every firstborn of your sons you must redeem.

14

In the future, when your son asks you ‘What is this?’ you are to tell him, ‘With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the land of slavery. **15** When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to release us, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of people to the firstborn of animals. That is why I am sacrificing to the

LORD the first male offspring of every womb, but all my firstborn sons I redeem.’ **16** It will be for a sign on your hand and for frontlets on your forehead, for with a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

17 When Pharaoh released the people, God did not lead them by the way to the land of the Philistines, although that was nearby, for God said, “Lest the people change their minds and return to Egypt when they experience war.” **18** So God brought the people around by the way of the desert to the Red Sea, and the Israelites went up from the land of Egypt prepared for battle.

19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly swear, “God will surely attend to you, and you will carry my bones up from this place with you.”

20 They journeyed from Sukkoth and camped in Etham, on the edge of the desert. **21** Now the LORD was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel day or night. **22** He did not remove the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

Guzik - Exodus 14:1-31

Exodus 14 - The Crossing of the Red Sea

A. The pursuit of Pharaoh's armies.

1. (1-4) God draws Pharaoh to come out against Israel.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They *are* bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD." And they did so.

a. **You shall camp before it by the sea:** We could say that God set an ambush for Pharaoh.

Even after the horror of the death of the firstborn, the change in Pharaoh's heart was only temporary. He was quick to strike at Israel when he had the chance.

b. **They are bewildered by the land:** This was exactly what God wanted Pharaoh to believe. God told Moses to lead Israel in a way that looked confused. God told Moses and Israel to do something crazy because *God knew* how He could be glorified through it.

2. (5-9) Pharaoh decides to bring the children of Israel back. Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his

servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of

Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before

Baal Zephon.

a. **Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?** This was a strange question for Pharaoh to ask. It isn't hard to think of at least ten good reasons - namely, ten powerful plagues - why Pharaoh let Israel go.

i. This demonstrates how we are often quick to forget what God has done and what He has shown us. It is easy to quickly move from walking in the spirit to walking in the

flesh.

ii. Perhaps Pharaoh thought that the LORD had shot all His arrows and had no more "ammunition" against Egypt. After all, no more died after the plague of the firstborn; but God isn't short on resources. He had plenty of ammunition left.

b. **Six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt:** Pharaoh was well equipped with the best military resources. Chariots were the most sophisticated military technology available at that time. Israel had nothing except **the children of Israel went out with boldness.**

i. The idea behind the Hebrew words **with boldness** (*ruwn yad*) include the idea of rebellion against authority (1Ki. 11:26-27).

The rebellious nature of Israel was good when it was against Pharaoh and all it stood for; it was bad when it was against the LORD, Moses, and all they stood for. The trouble with rebels is they rebel against the wrong things!

ii. Psa. 106:7-12 describes this rebelliousness on the part of Israel at the Red Sea, also mentioned in Exo. 14:10-12:
Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea; the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. The waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left. Then they believed His words; they sang His praise.

3. (10-12) The response of the children of Israel.

And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

Then they said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? *Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

a. **They were very afraid:** It made sense for Israel to be afraid. According to all outward observation, Israel was in serious trouble with Pharaoh's armies on one side and the Red Sea on the other. They seemed to have no chance for escape.

i. God led Israel right into a cul-de-sac.

There was no way of escape except the way they had come in, and the Egyptian army had that path covered.

ii. We sometimes think that Satan will let us go easily, or we think that that once we leave his kingdom he forgets about us. Yet just like Pharaoh after Israel, Satan pursues us, attempting to keep us at least on the fringes of his domain and hoping to destroy us if he can.

b. **The children of Israel cried out to the**

LORD: This was a good thing to do. When we find ourselves in dangerous places with no easy escape, we must cry out to God, because *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble* (Psa. 46:1).

c. **Then they said to Moses:** Their fear could be understood and their cry to the LORD made sense. Yet their words to Moses show a great

lack of faith and loss of confidence in God. No reasonable mind could really think that Moses planned all this to lead the people of Israel to their death in the wilderness.

i. They thought they could read the mind and heart of Moses. We are often wrong and always on dangerous ground when we claim we can read the intentions of other's hearts. Moses said nothing or did nothing that would support such a conspiracy theory, but the children of Israel still thought this way.

d. **Let us alone that we may serve the**

Egyptians: The children of Israel were not yet a week out of Egypt and they were already distorting the past, thinking that it was better for them in Egypt than it really was.

4. (13-14) Moses responds with great courage.

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid.

Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

a. **Do not be afraid:** At this point, Moses could have no idea how God would come through in the situation. All he knew was God certainly *would* come through. In a sense, Moses knew he was in such a bad situation that God *had* to come through.

i. When we see that our only help is God, we are more likely to trust Him. Sometimes it is the little things - the things we *think* we can do in our own strength - that get us down, not the big things that we *know* only God can do.

b. **Stand still:** Moses told the people of Israel to *stop*. This is often the LORD's direction to the believer in a time of crisis. *Despair* will cast you down, keeping you from standing. *Fear* will tell you to retreat. *Impatience* will tell you to do

something now. *Presumption* will tell you to jump into the Red Sea before it is parted. But as God told Israel He often tells us to simply **stand still** as He reveals His plan.

c. **See the salvation of the LORD:** Moses didn't know what God would do. Yet he knew what the result would be. He knew that God would save His people and that the enemies of the Lord would be destroyed. He could say to Israel, "**the LORD will fight for you.**"

d. **You shall see them no more forever:** The idea behind this implies much more than at first look. Moses perhaps spoke in terms of eternity as well as their present time.

B. God leads Israel across the Red Sea.

1. (15-18) God's instructions to Moses: stop praying and start doing.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

a. **Why do you cry to Me?** Before the people, Moses was full of faith. But before God he cried out in desperate prayer. This was good because Moses had to show confidence before the nation to encourage *their* faith.

b. **Why do you cry to Me?** There is a time to pray, and a time to act. It can actually be *against* God's will to stop *doing* and to *only* pray in a particular situation.

i. This is especially true when our prayer is not made unto God alone. Sometimes we pray out of the wrong motives and

sometimes we pray to inform others who listen. We can use a call to prayer to actually control a situation or we can pray to avoid action or buy time.

c. Lift up your rod, and stretch out your

hand: These were simple instructions that resulted in a mighty miracle. In the same manner, the greatest miracle of salvation happens with simple actions on our part.

d. Then the Egyptians shall know that I

am the LORD: God was not finished answering Pharaoh's question from Exo. 5:2, when Pharaoh asked " *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?* " God used the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea to speak to *Egypt* as much as He used it to speak to *Israel*.

i. This is an aspect of the spiritual life rarely reflected upon. When God delivers us from a temptation or crisis, it is as much a testimony to our invisible adversaries as it is to us. God uses each victory in our life to tell our unseen enemies of His power and ability to work in and through frail humanity.

2. (19-20) God neutralizes the Egyptian army with the fire. And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness *to the one*, and it gave light by night *to the other*, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

a. The pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them:

The pillar previously mentioned in Exo. 13:21-22 was now positioned as a barrier between the attacking Egyptians and the children of Israel. God

protected Israel from the Egyptian attack until a way was made through the Red Sea.

i. We often have little idea how much God does to protect us from the attacks of our unseen enemies. We sometimes feel that we are overwhelmed in a present spiritual struggle, but we may not know what it would be like if the LORD pulled back His protection.

b. **It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel:** The Egyptians didn't know it, but the same pillar that prevented their pursuit of Israel also protected their lives. If they had submitted to the LORD who blocked their way with His presence, they would have been spared.

c. **Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other:** The pillar was a source of darkness to the Egyptians but a source of light to Israel. This is a vivid picture of how the glory of God can be light to one person yet seem dark to another.

3. (21-22) The waters of the Red Sea are parted, and the children of Israel cross over safely on dry ground.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry *land*, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry *ground*, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

a. **Moses stretched out his hand over the sea:** Other passages (such as Exo. 13:18 and 15:14) identify this body of water as the *Red Sea*. The Hebrew phrase for *Red Sea* is *yam suph*, which clearly means "Reed Sea."

Scholars and archeologists have attempted for years to positively identify this body of water.

i. "The term aptly describes the lake region north of the Gulf of Suez comprising the

Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah. It is possible that the Israelites went along the narrow neck of land on which Baal-zephon stood and that the Biblical Sea of Reeds was modern Lake Sirbonis. We are certain that the crossing was in this area because the Israelites found themselves in the Wilderness of Shur after crossing the sea (Exo. 15:22)." (Pfeiffer)

ii. We don't know exactly where the place was, and what the exact geography was. This is especially true because an area like this will change geography every flood or drought season. We do know there was enough water there to trap the Israelites and to later drown the Egyptians. We can surmise that this was perhaps 10 feet of water or so. We also can surmise that there was enough width in the crossing for the large group of Israelites to cross over in one night - perhaps a mile wide stretch.

b. The LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided:

Some believe this is simply an ancient legend and did not actually happen. However, modern research has demonstrated that it was completely plausible, according to a *Los Angeles Times* article by Thomas H. Maugh titled "Research Supports Bible's Account of Red Sea Parting" (3/14/92): i. "Sophisticated computer calculations indicate that the biblical parting of the Red

Sea, said to have allowed Moses and the Israelites to escape from bondage in Egypt, could have occurred precisely as the Bible describes it.

Because of the peculiar geography of the northern end of the Red Sea, researchers report Sunday in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, a moderate wind blowing constantly for about 10 hours could have caused the sea to recede about a mile and the water level to drop 10 feet, leaving dry land in the area where many biblical scholars believe the crossing occurred."

c. The waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left: Psa. 77:16-20

gives more detail in the description of the course of events during the Red Sea crossing:

The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were afraid; the depths also trembled.

The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about. The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook. Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps were not known. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

4. (23-28) God troubles the Egyptian army, and they are drowned.

And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their

chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

a. **He took off their chariot wheels:** God miraculously worked on the side of Israel against the Egyptians. He **troubled the army of the Egyptians** until Israel had crossed over the Red Sea. Only then did He allow the Egyptian army to continue their pursuit through the parted waters.

b. **So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea:** Though some also regard this as simply an ancient legend, modern research again shows it is completely possible.

Thomas H. Maugh continued in his *Los Angeles Times* article:

i. "An abrupt change in the wind would have allowed the waters to come crashing back into the area in a few moments, a phenomenon that the Bible says inundated the Israelites' pursuers."

c. **Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians:** God told Moses to *do* something with his hand connected with the

motion of the sea. We know that it was not really the power of Moses' hand that held back the sea or allowed it to come crashing back upon the Egyptian army. It was the power of God at work.

i. God could have performed this miracle just as easily without Moses' cooperation. Yet, God delights in using human agents to take part in His miraculous works. We can say that many miraculous works of God are yet to be done because no human agent has stepped forth to be the one who will "stretch out their hand."

ii. In addition, this was God's vindication of Moses. Israel previously accused him of the lowest of motivations, and the most evil state of heart (Exo. 14:10-12). Through this work through Moses God showed the whole nation that Moses was their chosen leader.

d. **Not so much as one of them remained:** The deliverance at the Red Sea became a turning point in Israel's history. In this era of Israel's history they had many troubles ahead but *Pharaoh and the Egyptians* never troubled them again.

5. (29-31) Summary: another act of redemption on Israel's behalf.

But the children of Israel had walked on dry *land* in the midst of the sea, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

a. **Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the**

seashore: This was confirmation to Israel that their deliverance from Egypt was real and complete. An oppressed people are slow to believe they are free while their tyrant still lives.

God wanted Israel to know that their oppressors were dead.

i. "Somehow the sight of those dead bodies was the concrete sign that salvation and a new life for Israel were now assured." (Cole).

b. So the LORD saved Israel that day out

of the hand of the Egyptians: God delivered Israel in seemingly impossible circumstances.

He demonstrated His faithfulness to Israel and to all His people.

i. Spurgeon told the story of an old saint who lay on her deathbed and declared that Jesus would never forsake her, because He had promised so. Someone asked her, "But suppose that He did not keep His promise, and you were to be lost?" She answered, "Then He would be the greater loser than I. It is true I would lose my soul, but God would lose all His honor and glory if He were not true." God's motive for delivering us is not only His love for us, but also a desire to guard His own glory and honor.

ii. "Brethren, if we have trusted in God, and have come out of the Egypt of the world through his grace, and have left all its sins behind us, if we were left to die in the wilderness, the Lord Jesus Christ would lose his glory as a Saviour, the divine Father would lose his name for immutable faithfulness, and the Holy Ghost would lose his honour for perseverance in completing every work which he undertakes." (Spurgeon).

c. The people feared the LORD, and

believed the LORD and His servant Moses: This was just the result God intended. Sadly for Israel they did not stay in this place of respect and faith toward the LORD. This was probably more a circumstance of feelings than it was of true faith, because they left this place of respect for the LORD and Moses quickly.

i. We can say that the deliverance of Passover and the miracle of the Red Sea go together. If not for the victory won at the Red Sea, the redemption at Passover would have meant nothing. But they would have never made it to the Red Sea without the miracle of God's redemption at Passover. In the same way, the redemption of the cross would mean nothing without the miracle of the resurrection. The two works of deliverance must go hand in hand.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** “Tell the Israelites that they must turn and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you are to camp by the sea before Baal Zephon opposite it.

3

Pharaoh will think regarding the Israelites, ‘They are wandering around confused in the land – the desert has closed in on them.’ **4** I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will chase after them. I will gain honor because of Pharaoh and because of all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So this is what they did. **5** When it was reported to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people, and the king and his servants said, “What in the world have we done? For we have released the people of Israel from serving us!” **6** Then he prepared his chariots and took his army with him. **7** He took six hundred select

chariots, and all the rest of the chariots of Egypt, and officers on all of them.

8 But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he chased after the Israelites. Now the Israelites were going out defiantly. **9** The Egyptians chased after them, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon. **10** When Pharaoh got closer, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians marching after them, and they were terrified. The Israelites cried out to the LORD, **11** and they said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the desert? What in the world have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Isn't this what we told you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians, because it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!'"

13 Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand firm and see the salvation of the LORD that he will provide for you today; for the Egyptians that you see today you will never, ever see again. **14** The LORD will fight for you, and you can be still."

15 The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. **16** And as for you, lift up your staff and extend your hand toward the sea and divide it, so that the Israelites may go through the middle of the sea on dry ground. **17** And as for me, I am going to harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will come after them, that I may be honored because of Pharaoh and his army and his chariots and his horsemen. **18** And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I have gained my honor because of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

19 The angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. **20**

It came between the Egyptian camp and the Israelite camp; it was a dark cloud and it lit up the night so that one camp did not come near the other the whole night. **21**

Moses stretched out his hand toward the sea, and the LORD drove the sea apart by a strong east wind all that night, and he made the sea into dry land, and the water was divided.

22 So the Israelites went through the middle of the sea on dry ground, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

23 The Egyptians chased them and followed them into the middle of the sea – all the horses of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. **24** In the morning watch the LORD

looked down on the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw the Egyptian army into a panic. **25** He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving, and the Egyptians said, “Let’s flee from Israel, for the LORD fights for them against Egypt!”

26 The LORD said to Moses, “Extend your hand toward the sea, so that the waters may flow back on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen!” **27**

So Moses extended his hand toward the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state when the sun began to rise.

Now the Egyptians were fleeing before it, but the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. **28** The

water returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh that was coming after the Israelites into the sea – not so much as one of them

survived! **29** But the Israelites walked on dry ground in the middle of the sea, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. **30** So the LORD saved Israel on that

day from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea. **31**

When Israel saw the great power that the LORD had exercised over the Egyptians, they feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD.
They said,

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously,
the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.

Guzik - Exodus 15:1-27

Exodus 15 - The Song of Moses

A. The Song of Moses.

1. (1-5) First stanza: **The LORD is a man of war.**

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying:

"I will sing to the LORD,

For He has triumphed gloriously!

The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!

The LORD *is* my strength and song,

And He has become my salvation;

He *is* my God, and I will praise Him;

My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

The LORD *is* a man of war;

The LORD *is* His name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;

His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.

The depths have covered them;

They sank to the bottom like a stone."

a. **Then Moses and the children of Israel**

sang this song to the LORD: This remarkable song is assumed to have come spontaneously as Moses led the nation into the wilderness on the other side of the Red Sea.

i. God prizes these spontaneous expressions of praise and worship. This was a *new song* sung unto the LORD (as in Psa. 40:3).

b. **I will sing to the LORD** : One great principles of worship is that it is unto **the LORD**, not unto man. When we worship God in song, our audience is the LORD Himself and not the people around us.

c. **The horse and its rider He has thrown**

into the sea! They praised God because He did what Israel could not do.

d. **The LORD is my strength and song:**

When we let God be our **strength**, He will also be our **song**. We will sing because of the victory won by the great strength of the LORD.

We will have a "singing joy" in our life because His strength will not let us down.

e. **He has become my salvation:** This is a glorious phrase. It recognizes that we cannot save ourselves, but God must **become** our salvation.

2. (6-10) Second stanza: **You have overthrown those who rose against You.**

"Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power;
Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy
in pieces.

And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown
those who rose against You;

You sent forth Your wrath;

It consumed them like stubble.

And with the blast of Your nostrils

The waters were gathered together;

The floods stood upright like a heap;

The depths congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide
the spoil;

My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword,
My hand shall destroy them.'

You blew with Your wind,

The sea covered them;

They sank like lead in the mighty waters."

a. **Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed**

the enemy in pieces: Moses and the people described
what God did to the Egyptians, and

they gloried in the defeat of God's enemies. If we really love
the LORD, we should glory in the defeat of God's enemies.

b. **Your right hand:** The **right hand** was thought to be the hand of skill and power.

When God works with His **right hand**, it is a work of skill and power.

i. Obviously, this is the use of *anthropomorphism*, understanding something about God by using a human figure of speech, even though it does not literally apply.

ii. This idea of the **right hand** is used in the Scriptures more than fifty times, including these passages:

- Psalm 45:4: God's right hand teaches us

- Psalm 48:10: God's right hand is full of righteousness

- Psalm 77:10: Remembrance of *the years of the right hand of the Most High*

- Psalm 110:1: The Father invites the Son to sit at His right hand

- Habakkuk 2:16: The cup of God's judgment is held in His right hand

- Ephesians 1:20: Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father

3. (11-13) Third stanza: **Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?**

"Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods?

Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?

You stretched out Your right hand;

The earth swallowed them.

You in Your mercy have led forth

The people whom You have redeemed;

You have guided *them* in Your strength To Your holy habitation."

a. **Who is like You, O LORD, among the**

gods? If the people of Egypt still did not know who the LORD was, the people of Israel did.

They knew the LORD was not like any of the false gods of Egypt or Canaan.

b. **Who is like You:** Worship should proclaim the superiority of the LORD God over anything else that claims to be god. Israel soon and often forgot this, but we can remember it.

4. (14-18) Fourth and fifth stanza: **The people will hear and be afraid.**

"The people will hear *and* be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia.

Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed;

The mighty men of Moab,

Trembling will take hold of them;

All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away.

Fear and dread will fall on them;

By the greatness of Your arm

They will be *as* still as a stone,

Till Your people pass over, O LORD,

Till the people pass over

Whom You have purchased.

You will bring them in and plant them

In the mountain of Your inheritance,

In the place, O LORD, *which* You have made For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O LORD, *which* Your hands have established.

The LORD shall reign forever and ever."

a. **All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt**

away: Moses and the children of Israel knew that the victory also said something to the

enemies of Israel. They would become afraid

when they heard of the great things God did for Israel.

b. **Fear and dread will fall on them:** Some forty years later Rahab the prostitute from

Jericho told the Israeli spies: *For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt* (Jos.

2:10). The people of Canaan *did* hear of what God did for Israel and some responded with godly fear.

c. **The LORD shall reign forever and ever:** After such a great victory we can sense that Israel really believed this, and they were really ready to let the LORD **reign** over them. This state of victory and surrender did not last very long.

5. (19-21) Miriam, Moses' sister, leads the women in worship. For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them.

But the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea. Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them:

"Sing to the LORD,

For He has triumphed gloriously!

The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"

a. **Miriam the prophetess, the sister of**

Aaron: This is the first mention of **Miriam** by name, and she is described as **the sister of Aaron**, so she is therefore also the sister of Moses (Exo. 4:14).

i. Num. 26:59 seems to indicate that Moses had only one sister. We do know that it was his sister who supervised the launching of the basket onto the Nile River to preserve his life (Exo. 2:14) and arranged the hiring of Moses' mother as his nurse. Based on Num. 26:59, we can say this was probably - almost certainly - Miriam. She was the older

sister of Moses.

b. **Miriam the prophetess:** We also see that Miriam had some kind of prophetic gift. Later she used her leadership position in an unwise and ungodly way - to challenge the authority of Moses (Numbers 12).

c. **All the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances:** On this occasion Miriam led the "women's choir."

B. The bitter water is made drinkable.

1. (22) Three days into the wilderness.

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water.

a. **Moses brought Israel . . . they went out into the Wilderness of Shur:** God's man led them, but he led them an unusual way. Into **the Wilderness of Shur** was outside the major trade route along the sea.

b. **They went three days in the wilderness and found no water:** Three days is not a very long time. But it is long enough to forget the great victory and power of God. Now Israel faced a long trip through difficult and dry desert.

i. "Three days is the maximum time the human body can go without water in the desert." (Buckingham)

2. (23-25a) Bitter waters made sweet at Marah.

Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter.

Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying,

"What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When

he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an

ordinance for them.

a. They could not drink the waters of

Marah, for they were bitter: It must have seemed like a cruel joke - after three waterless days, they finally came upon water - and found that water undrinkable.

b. So he cried out to the LORD, and the

LORD showed him a tree: By following God's direction, Moses made the waters drinkable and Israel found water in the wilderness.

i. How did the tree work? In his work on the Exodus journey, Buckingham thinks the chemicals in the sap of the broken limb drew the mineral content down to the bottom of the pools, and left only good water on top.

ii. He further speculates that even though the waters were now drinkable, there was still a significant magnesium and calcium content in the water. The laxative effect of this would clean out the digestive systems of the children of Israel, cleansing them of common Egyptian ailments such as amoebic dysentery and bilharzia, a weakening disease common among Egyptian peasants.

In addition, calcium and magnesium together form the basis of a drug called dolomite - used by some athletes as a performance enhancer in hot weather conditions. At Marah, God provided the right medicine to both clean out their systems, and prepare them for a long, hot march to Sinai.

iii. We can say that God was not only interested in getting the children of Israel out of Egypt, He also wanted to get Egypt out of the children of Israel - both physically and spiritually.

3. (25b-27) The testing of Israel.

And there He tested them, and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you." Then they came to Elim, where there *were* twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

a. **And there He tested them:** God **tested** Israel by giving them a command to obey.

When God tells us what to do, He really gives us a test. Our obedience determines if we pass the test or not.

i. It had yet to be demonstrated by a test whether the children of Israel were worshipping people who occasionally murmured, or if they were a murmuring people who occasionally worshipped. Their true nature would be revealed in times of testing.

b. **I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians:**

This was God's promise to an obedient Israel. In many ways, their physical health was directly connected to their obedience.

i. Dr. S.I. McMillen in his book *None of These Diseases* notes that many of God's laws to Israel had a direct impact of hygiene and health. Practices such as circumcision, quarantine, washing in running water, and eating kosher made a real medical difference in keeping Israel free from disease.

ii. Beyond the direct medical implications, obedience also means we are at peace with God - and free from a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety in life. This has an obvious benefit to the health of any person.

c. Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees:

After the time of testing God had a time of refreshing for the people of Israel. He knew exactly what they needed, and He knew when to test them and when to rest them.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

This is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The LORD is a warrior,
the LORD is his name.

4 The chariots of Pharaoh and his army he has thrown into the sea,
and his chosen officers were drowned in the Red Sea.

5 The depths have covered them,
they went down to the bottom like a stone.

6 Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power, your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.

7 In the abundance of your majesty you have overthrown those who rise up against you.
You sent forth your wrath;
it consumed them like stubble.

8 By the blast of your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing water stood upright like a heap, and the deep waters were solidified in the heart of the sea.

9 The enemy said, 'I will chase, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;
my desire will be satisfied on them.

I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them.'

10 But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them.

They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?

Who is like you? – majestic in holiness, fearful in praises, working wonders?

12 You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them.

13 By your loyal love you will lead the people whom you have redeemed;
you will guide them by your strength to your holy dwelling place.

14 The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will seize the inhabitants of Philistia.

15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be terrified, trembling will seize the leaders of Moab, and the inhabitants of Canaan will shake.

16 Fear and dread will fall on them; by the greatness of your arm they will be as still as stone until your people pass by, O LORD,
until the people whom you have bought pass by.

17 You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance,
in the place you made for your residence, O Lord, the sanctuary, O LORD, that your hands have established.

18 The LORD will reign forever and ever!

19 For the horses of Pharaoh came with his chariots and his footmen into the sea,
and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the Israelites walked on dry land in the middle of the sea.”

20 Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a hand-drum in her hand, and all the women went out after her with hand-drums and with dances. **21** Miriam sang in response to them, “Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.”

22 Then Moses led Israel to journey away from the Red Sea. They went out to the Desert of Shur, walked for three days into the desert, and found no water. **23** Then they came to

Marah, but they were not able to drink the waters of Marah, because they were bitter. (That is why its name was Marah.)

24 So the people murmured against Moses, saying,

“What can we drink?” **25** He cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When Moses threw it into the water, the water became safe to drink. There the Lord made for them a binding ordinance, and there he tested them. **26** He said, “If you will diligently obey the LORD

your God, and do what is right in his sight, and pay attention to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, then all the diseases that I brought on the Egyptians I will not bring on you, for I, the LORD, am your healer.”

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there by the water.

1 When they journeyed from Elim, the entire company of Israelites came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their exodus from the land of Egypt.

Guzik - Exodus 16:1-36

Exodus 16 - Manna for the Children of Israel

A. God's promise to provide.

1. (1-3) The murmuring of the nation against Moses and Aaron.

And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and

Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full!

For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

a. On the fifteenth day of the second

month: This marks one month after leaving Egypt, since they left on the fifteenth of the previous month (Exo. 12:18).

b. The Wilderness of Sin, which is between

Elim and Sinai: They came out from **Elim**, an oasis of rest and comfort (Exo. 15:27). They were headed for **Sinai**, a place to meet with God and receive His law. In between **Elim and Sinai** was **the wilderness of Sin**.

i. In the original text the name "**Wilderness of Sin**" has nothing to do with "sin" and could just as easily be translated *Wilderness of Zin*. Yet as the story unfolds, we see that this wilderness had a lot to do with sin.

c. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against

Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: They complained because they did not have enough food. The supplies they carried with them from Egypt began to run out.

i. Their murmuring was not completely without merit. They did need to eat, and there was little available for food. The problem was they did not see the big picture but Moses and Aaron did see it. They could see where God brought them from, and where God would take them - all Israel saw was the present difficulty.

ii. It was a good thing that Israel was not ruled by a democracy at this point. Things would have gone rather badly for Moses and Israel had they listened to "majority rule."

d. When we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full:

This is common among those who murmur. Here Israel had a selective remembrance of the past. They did see the future the right way and they twisted the past to support their complaining.

e. You have brought us out into this

wilderness to kill this whole assembly: This is another common practice among those who murmur. They insisted that Moses and Aaron had bad or evil intentions. Of course, Moses and Aaron had no interest in killing the whole people of Israel, and this was a horrible accusation to make. Yet a complaining heart often finds it easy to accuse the person they complain against of the worst motives.

3. (4-5) God announces to Moses the coming of **bread from heaven.**

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

a. **Behold, I will rain bread from heaven**

for you: The blessing of **bread from heaven** came with the responsibility of obedience. This responsibility would test Israel and measure their obedience.

i. Murmuring Israel called this **bread from**

heaven "manna" (Exo. 16:31). God almost always called it *bread from heaven* (Neh.

9:15, Psa. 78:24 and Psa. 105:40) or

sometimes it was called *angels' food* (Psa. 78:25).

b. **That I may test them:** The test came on the sixth day, when they were to gather twice as much, so the seventh day could be received as a day of rest.

4. (6-8) Moses tells the people about God's coming provision.

Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD

has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD.

But what *are* we, that you complain against us?"

Also Moses said, "*This shall be seen* when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD

hears your complaints which you make against

Him. And what *are* we? Your complaints *are* not against us but against the LORD."

a. He hears your complaints against the LORD . . . your complaints against the LORD . . . Your complaints are not against us, but against the LORD: The people

thought they were murmuring against Moses and Aaron (Exo. 16:2). Really, they murmured against the LORD.

b. When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening: This promise of God to Moses was not previously recorded.

B. God's provision of Manna.

1. (9-14) God provides quail for meat and **bread from heaven.**

Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.' " Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

"I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.' " So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning

the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, *as fine as frost on the ground*.

a. **So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp:** This was a significant display of the mercy of God. When Israel complained God could have answered with

judgment or discipline, and He gave them meat instead.

i. The **quails** mentioned here "migrate regularly between south Europe and Arabia across the Sinai Peninsula. They are small, bullet-headed birds, with a strong but low flight, usually roosting on the ground or in the low bushes at nightfall. When exhausted, they would be unable to . . . take off again. The birds are good eating, and were a favorite delicacy of the Egyptians." (Cole)

b. **A small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground:** The bread from heaven came with the dew each morning, as "residue" from the dew. It was **small, round** and **fine as frost on the ground**. It was therefore not easy to gather. It had to be "swept" up from the ground.

i. Exo. 16:31 further describes the bread from heaven as *like coriander seed* (about the size of a sesame seed), and sweet like

honey; Num. 11:7 says it was the color of *bdellium* (a pearl-like color). It was either baked or boiled (Exo. 16:23).

ii. Jewish legends supposedly tell us what this bread from heaven tasted like. "One only had to desire a certain dish, and no sooner had he thought of it, than manna had the flavor of the dish desired. The same food had a different taste to everyone who

partook of it, according to his age; to the little children, it tasted like milk, to the strong youths like bread, to the old men like honey, to the sick like barley steeped in oil and honey." But they also wrote that manna was bitter in the mouth of Gentiles.

(Ginzberg)

iii. Jewish legends also supposedly tell us how they could sweep it up off the desert floor and not have dirt in it. These legends say that when God sent manna, He first sent a north wind to sweep the floor of the desert and then a rain to wash it clean. Then the manna descended on clean ground.

c. **A small round substance:** It is difficult to precisely identify what this **substance** was.

Some researchers identify it with what the Arabs today call *mann*, which is formed when "A tiny insect punctures the bark of the tamarisk tree, drinks the sap, and exudes a clear liquid that solidifies as a sugary globule when it hits the ground. When the sun comes up, it melts quickly and disappears." (Buckingham)

i. Though the bread from heaven may have been similar to the modern day *mann* in the Sinai Peninsula, it wasn't the same thing.

The modern day *mann* never appears in great quantities, it doesn't last year round, and it is confined to a small geographic region.

d. **As fine as frost on the ground:** The purpose for giving the bread from heaven was not only to provide for the material needs of Israel, but also to teach them eternal lessons of dependence on God. This is demonstrated in passages like Deu. 8:3: *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor*

did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. When God puts us in a place of need, He wants to do more than meet the need. He wants to teach an eternal lesson.

i. Feeding Israel through the bread from heaven was an example of God's way of cooperating with man. Israel could not bring the manna and God would not gather it for them. Each had to do their part.

ii. "Animals are often taught through their food. When they could not be reached in any other way, they have been instructed by their hunger, and by their thirst, and by their feeding." (Spurgeon)

2. (15) The people call the bread from heaven **manna**.

So when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it *was*. And Moses said to them, "This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.

a. **What is it?** The name **manna** (given later in Exo. 16:31) means, "What is that?" and the name comes from the question asked in this verse.

b. **For they did not know what it was:**

When God's provision comes, we often do not recognize it. God met the needs of Israel but He did it in a way they did not expect.

3. (16-19) Instructions on the gathering of bread from heaven.

"This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, *according to the* number of persons; let every man take for *those who are* in his tent.'" Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. So when they

measured *it* by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.

Every man had gathered according to each one's need. And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning."

a. **Let every man gather it according to**

each one's need: The bread from heaven was to be gathered on an individual or a family basis. There was to be no "tribal manna gathering and distribution center." Every household had to provide for itself, and a rich family could not hire a poor family to do their work for them.

b. **One omer for each person:** An **omer** could be as much as a gallon, especially in the later history of Israel. But at this early point in Israel's history it may have meant only a "cupful." It is an imprecise measure.

4. (20-21) Some of the people fail God's test.

Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

a. **Notwithstanding they did not heed**

Moses: They clearly heard God's command and they clearly knew God's command. Yet for some reason they felt they did not have to obey God's command. There was a harsh penalty for their disobedience - what they gathered in disobedience **bred worms and stank.**

b. **So they gathered it every morning,**

every man according to his need: The bad experience of their disobedience led them reluctantly to obedience.

c. **When the sun became hot, it melted:**

Apparently the bread from heaven had to be gathered and prepared early in the morning.

This was God's gracious way of forcing a work ethic upon the nation of Israel.

5. (22-30) God provides double on the day before the Sabbath.

And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. Then he said to them,

"This *is what* the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'" So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then

Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, *which is* the Sabbath, there will be none." Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For the LORD has given you

the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." So the people rested on the seventh day.

a. Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy

Sabbath to the LORD: This was the first time God spoke to Israel about the Sabbath. God essentially forced them to honor the Sabbath by not providing any bread from heaven on the Sabbath day.

b. Some of the people went out on the

seventh day to gather: Despite what God said, some went looking for bread from heaven when He said there would be none. God's word

was true and they found none. People today still look for life and fulfillment in places God has said there would be none.

6. (31-36) God commands some bread from heaven be set aside as a testimony to His provision.

And the house of Israel called its name Manna.

And it *was* like white coriander seed, and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey. Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD

has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'"

And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. Now an omer *is* one-tenth of an ephah.

a. **And the house of Israel called its name**

Manna: This name means, "What is that?" It is based on the question asked in Exodus 16: 15.

b. **It was like white coriander seed:** This refers to the small size of the particles of the bread from heaven. It meant that it had to be humbly, carefully gathered.

c. **The taste of it was like wafers made**

with honey: God gave Israel good tasting food. He didn't give them tasteless gruel or pasty porridge. Since it could be baked like bread or cake (Exo. 16:23), eating manna was like eating sweet bread every day.

d. **Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations:** This pot full of the bread from heaven was

later put into the ark of the covenant, referred to here as **the Testimony** (Heb. 9:4).

e. They ate manna until they came to the

border of the land of Canaan: As important as it was for God to provide this bread from heaven, it was also important for God to *stop* providing it. It was essential that Israel be put again in the position to receive God's "normal" provision, through hard work - which in itself is a blessing of God.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The entire company of Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron in the desert. **3** The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this desert to kill this whole assembly with hunger!"

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people will go out and gather the amount for each day, so that I may test them.

Will they will walk in my law or not? **5** On the sixth day they will prepare what they bring in, and it will be twice as much as they gather every other day."

6 Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt, **7** and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your murmurings against the LORD. As for us, what are we, that you should murmur against us?"

8 Moses said, "You will know this when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and bread in the morning to satisfy you, because the LORD has heard your murmurings that you are murmuring against him. As for us, what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD."

9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole community of the Israelites, 'Come before the LORD, because he has heard

your murmurings.”

10 As Aaron spoke to the whole community of the Israelites and they looked toward the desert, there the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud, **11** and the LORD

spoke to Moses: **12** “I have heard the murmurings of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘During the evening you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread, so that you may know that I am the LORD your God.’”

13 In the evening the quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning a layer of dew was all around the camp.

14 When the layer of dew had evaporated, there on the surface of the desert was a thin flaky substance, thin like frost on the earth. **15** When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?”

because they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you for food.

16 “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Each person is to gather from it what he can eat, an omer per person according to the number of your people; each one will pick it up for whoever lives in his tent.’” **17** The Israelites did so, and they gathered – some more, some less. **18** When they measured with an omer, the one who gathered much had nothing left over, and the one who gathered little lacked nothing; each one had gathered what he could eat.

19 Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.” **20** But they did not listen to Moses; some kept part of it until morning, and it was full of worms and began to stink, and Moses was angry with them. **21** So they gathered it each morning, each person according to what he could eat, and when the sun got hot, it would melt. **22** And on the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, two omers per person; and all the leaders of the community came and told Moses. **23** He said to them, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Tomorrow is a time of cessation from work, a holy Sabbath to the LORD.’”

Whatever you want to bake, bake today; whatever you want to boil, boil today; whatever is left put aside for yourselves to be kept until morning.”

24 So they put it aside until the morning, just as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. **25** Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the area.

26 Six days you will gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

27 On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather it, but they found nothing. **28** So the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to obey my commandments and my instructions? **29** See, because the LORD has given you the Sabbath, that is why he is giving you food for two days on the sixth day. Each of you stay where you are; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” **30** So the people rested on the seventh day.

31 The house of Israel called its name “manna.” It was like coriander seed and was white, and it tasted like wafers with honey.

32 Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Fill an omer with it to be kept for generations to come, so that they may see the food I fed you in the desert when I brought you out from the land of Egypt.’” **33** Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put in it an omer full of manna, and place it before the LORD to be kept for generations to come.” **34** Just as the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony for safekeeping.

35 Now the Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was inhabited; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. **36** (Now an omer is one tenth of an ephah.) **1** The whole community of the Israelites traveled on their journey from the Desert of Sin according to the LORD’s instruction, and they pitched camp in Rephidim.

Now there was no water for the people to drink.

Guzik - Exodus 17:1-16

Exodus 17 - God's Provision and Protection of Israel

A. Water from the rock.

1. (1-4) The congregation of Israel contends with Moses.

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them,

"Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?" And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against

Moses, and said, "Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

a. According to the commandment of the LORD . . . but there was no water for the people to drink:

Israel did exactly what God commanded; yet there was no water to drink.

They were in the will of God but in a difficult time. It is possible to be completely in the will of God yet also in great problems.

b. Therefore the people contended with

Moses: The people of Israel had a real problem

- there was **no water for the people to**

drink. This was not an imaginary problem and the people were right to be concerned. But

when the people then **contended with**

Moses, they responded to the problem in the flesh.

c. Why do you tempt the LORD? The people focused their complaint against Moses, but

Moses understood that their problem was with the LORD.

i. When we have a problem it is much easier to blame someone than to think through the problem carefully and spiritually. In this situation Israel could have thought, "We are in a desert; it's not surprising there isn't much water here. We need to look to God to meet this need." Instead they blamed Moses and did nothing to *help* the problem.

d. **So Moses cried out to the LORD:** The lack of water wasn't Moses' fault. Yet as the leader of Israel, he had to lead them to the answer - and crying out to the LORD was the right way to lead them to the solution.

i. Moses knew the people were unfair to him (**What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!**). But he still had to lead while under the pressure of unfair attack, and he did the right thing in turning to God.

2. (5-6) God tells Moses how water will be provided.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

a. **Go on before the people:** Moses still had to lead, even in the difficult situation. A leader under attack may find it easy to shrink back from leadership, but God still wants leaders to lead.

b. **Take with you some of the elders of Israel:** At the same time, Moses' needed to lead in concert with the men of wisdom the LORD gave to Israel.

c. Take in your hand your rod with which

you struck the river: God directed Moses to use what was successful before. This gave

confidence to Moses, because he saw God use that same rod to do great miracles before.

i. Moses couldn't pick up that rod without remembering the power of God. The confidence he received by picking up the rod was a confidence in God, not in himself.

d. Behold, I will stand before you there: God assured Moses that He would be with him

in this very difficult trial and challenge of his leadership. Now Moses could lead boldly, confident that God was with him.

e. Water will come out of it: This plan made no sense, but Moses had to operate in obedience to God. The wisdom of the plan could only be seen in its ultimate success.

i. God required faith in Moses the leader. To do such a thing in front of the nation and the elders meant Moses had to have a lot of trust in God. He would look very foolish if he failed, so he had to depend greatly on God.

3. (7) Moses names the place as a rebuke to the children of Israel.

So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

a. So he called the name of the place:

Moses did what God told him to do and water came from the rock. This was a great miracle of God's provision and a rebuke to unbelieving and rebellious Israel.

i. We don't know exactly how God provided water from this rock. Perhaps there was an artesian spring that God caused to burst

forth when Moses struck the rock.

b. He called the name of the place Massah

and Meribah: God remembered the way Israel tested Him at Massah and Meribah, recalling it in many passages: · Deuteronomy 6:16: *You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah*

· Deuteronomy 9:22: *at . . . Massah . . . you provoked the LORD to wrath* · Deuteronomy 33:8: *Your holy one, Whom You tested at Massah, and with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah*

c. They tempted the LORD, saying "Is the LORD among us or not?" This attitude among the Israelites was their great sin. In this time of difficulty, the children of Israel - directly or indirectly - doubted the loving presence and care of God among them.

i. Later, when Israel remembered God's provision in the wilderness at the Feast of Tabernacles, they had a specific ceremony where they recalled this miracle of water from a rock. In that exact context, Jesus said: *If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.* (Joh. 7:37-38) ii. The living water Jesus spoke of was the Holy Spirit (Joh. 7:39); it is no less

miraculous for God to bring the love and power of the Holy Spirit out of our hearts than it is to bring water out of a rock - our hearts can be just as hard!

iii. Jesus was struck with Moses' rod - the curse of the law - and from Him flowed water to satisfy our spiritual thirst. As the old hymn says:

*Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,*

*Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its wrath and power.*

B. God brings victory to Israel over the Amalekites.

1. (8-11) Amalek battles Israel; the power of Moses' prayer.

Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek.

Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

a. **Now Amalek came and fought with**

Israel in Rephidim: This was an unprovoked attack by Amalek against Israel. In response, Moses called **Joshua** to lead the armies of Israel into battle, to defend the nation against the attack from **Amalek**.

i. The method of attack used by Amalek was despicable. Deu. 25:17-18 says: *Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.*

b. **So Joshua did as Moses said to him:** This is the first mention of the man **Joshua**. We find him doing what he does all until the time Moses passes from the scene - Joshua served the LORD and Moses faithfully.

c. **And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed:** Moses

supported the battle behind the scenes, busy in prayer. The fate of Israel in battle depended on Moses' intercession because when he prayed **Israel prevailed** and when he stopped

praying **Amalek prevailed.**

i. **Held up his hand:** This phrase describes the Israelite posture of prayer, even as some people today might bow their head or fold their hands.

ii. This amazing passage shows us that life or death for Israel depended on the prayers of one man. Moses prayed as we should pray - with passion, believing that life and death - perhaps eternally - depended on prayer.

iii. It can be difficult to reconcile this with knowing God has a pre-ordained plan. But God didn't want Moses to concern himself with that - he was to pray as if it really mattered. Just because we can't figure out how our prayers mesh with God's pre-ordained plan never means we should stop believing prayer matters.

iv. In his early days Moses thought the only way to win a battle was to fight (Exo. 2:11-15). Now Moses let Joshua fight while he did the more important work: pray for the victory.

2. (12-13) Moses' hands are strengthened in prayer.

But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the

sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

a. **Moses' hands became heavy:** The job of supporting the battle in prayer was difficult and Moses could not easily continue. We might think that fighting was the hard work

and praying was the easy work, but true prayer was also hard work.

i. Prayer is sometimes sweet and easy; other times it is hard work. This is why Paul described the ministry of Epaphras as *always laboring fervently for you in prayers* (Col. 4:12), and why Paul wrote we must *Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving* (Col. 4:2).

b. Aaron and Hur supported his hands:

Aaron and Hur came along side Moses and literally held his hands up in prayer. They helped him and partnered with him in intercession. Their help was successful: **his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.**

i. Though this was Moses' work to do, it was more than he could do by himself. Moses alone could not win the battle of prayer. He needed others to come by his side and strengthen him in prayer.

c. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword:

Because of this work of prayer Israel was victorious over Amalek. We are left with no other option than to say if Moses, Aaron, and Hur did not do the work in prayer, Israel would have been defeated, and history would have been changed.

i. This amazing passage shows us the great importance of prayer. Life and death - the course of history itself - depended upon prayer. We can conclude that many times the people of God are defeated today because they will not pray, or their work is not supported by prayer.

3. (14-16) A never-ending battle with Amalek.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

And Moses built an altar and called its name, THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER; for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

a. **I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven:** Because of God's strong command to battle against Amalek until they are completely conquered, many see the Amalekites as a picture of our flesh - which constantly battles against the spirit and must be struggled against until completely conquered (Gal. 5:17).

b. **And Moses built an altar and called its name, THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER:** Though Moses knew his prayer was important, he wasn't foolish enough to think that *he* won the battle. As an act of worship he built an altar and praised the name of **Yahweh-Nissi (THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER)**.

i. **Nissi** describes a flag or a banner. The idea is that God is victorious in battle and the flag of his victory is lifted high. The same word is used of the serpent on the pole in Num. 21:8, and in other significant passages:

· Psalm 60:4: *You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of the truth.*

· Isaiah 11:10: *And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.*

ii. Israel later disobeyed this command to

constantly war against Amalek in the days of Saul. This was the primary act of disobedience that cost Saul the throne (1Sa. 15:2-9 and 1Sa. 28:18).

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** So the people contended with Moses, and they said,

“Give us water to drink!” Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you test the LORD?” **3** But the people were very thirsty there for water, and they murmured against Moses and said, “Why in the world did you bring us up out of Egypt – to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”

4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What will I do with this people? – a little more and they will stone me!” **5**

The LORD said to Moses, “Go over before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile and go. **6** I will be standing before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you will strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in plain view of the elders of Israel.

7 He called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contending of the Israelites and because of their testing the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

8 Amalek came and attacked Israel in Rephidim. **9** So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

10 So Joshua fought against Amalek just as Moses had instructed him; and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. **11** Whenever Moses would raise his hands, then Israel prevailed, but whenever he would rest his hands, then Amalek prevailed. **12** When the hands of Moses became heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and

Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side and one on the other, and so his hands were steady until the sun went down. **13** So Joshua destroyed Amalek and his army with the sword.

14 The LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in Joshua's hearing; for I will surely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

15 Moses built an altar, and he called it "The LORD is my Banner," **16** for he said, "For a hand was lifted up to the throne of the LORD - that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

1 Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

Guzik - Exodus 18:1-27

Exodus 18 - Jethro's Counsel to Moses

A. Jethro and Moses meet.

1. (1-6) Moses meets with Jethro, his father-in-law, in the desert of Midian.

And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses

and for Israel His people; that the LORD had

brought Israel out of Egypt. Then Jethro, Moses'

father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, with her two sons, of

whom the name of one *was* Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land") and the name of the

other *was* Eliezer (for *he said*, "The God of my father *was* my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); and

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the

mountain of God. Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two

sons with her."

a. **Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took**

Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent

her back, with her two sons: Moses was here re-united with his wife Zipporah and his two sons Gershon and Eliezer. Apparently Moses sent his family back to Midian at some time, perhaps during the plagues of Egypt.

b. I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming

to you: Moses had a special relationship with Jethro. Even though he was raised in all the wisdom and education of Egypt, Moses no doubt learned more about real leadership from the priest and shepherd Jethro - whose flocks Moses tended until his call at Sinai.

2. (7-12) Jethro glorifies God when Moses reports what the LORD has done.

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and *how* the LORD had delivered them. Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, *He was* above them." Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and *other* sacrifices *to offer* to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

a. All the hardship . . . and how the LORD

had delivered them: Moses gave Jethro an honest report, describing both the hardships

and the deliverance.

b. Now I know that the LORD is greater

than all the gods: It is possible Jethro knew this before, because he was the *priest of Midian* (Exo. 18:1). But when he heard of God's great works over the gods of Egypt, it brought this

truth to Jethro more clearly than before.

B. Jethro's advice to Moses.

1. (13-16) Jethro observes Moses as he settles disputes among the children of Israel.

And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before

Moses from morning until evening. So when

Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

a. **Moses sat to judge the people:** Among such a large group there would naturally be

many disputes and questions of interpretation to settle.

Apparently Moses was virtually the only recognized judge in the nation, and the job of hearing each case occupied

Moses from morning until evening.

b. **And I make known the statutes of God**

and His laws: Because Moses knew the Word of God, he was fit to settle disputes among the children of Israel. Yet taking all this responsibility to himself was a massive burden.

2. (17-23) Jethro advises Moses to delegate the job of settling disputes.

So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. Both you and these people who *are* with you will

surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.

Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.

Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

a. **The thing that you do is not good:** It wasn't that Moses was unfit to hear their disputes; it wasn't that he didn't care about their disputes; it wasn't that the job was beneath him, it wasn't that the people didn't want Moses to hear their disputes. The problem was simply that the job was too big for Moses to do. His energies were spent unwisely. Moses must delegate, even as in Act. 6:2-4, the apostles insisted they needed to delegate so they would not *leave the word of God and serve tables*.

i. Much to Moses' credit, he was teachable; when Jethro said **the thing that you do is not good**, Moses listened to Jethro. Moses knew how to *not* bow to the complaints of the children of Israel (Exo. 17:3), but also knew how to hear godly counsel from a man like Jethro.

b. **Stand before God for the people:** This was the first essential step in effective

delegation for Moses. He had to pray for the people. Delegation will not work if God is not in it.

c. **Teach them the statutes and the laws:** For Moses to effectively delegate, he had to teach the Word of God not only to those who would hear the disputes, but also those who might dispute.

i. If the people knew God's word for themselves, many disputes could be settled immediately. Also, if the people knew God's word for themselves, they would not be discouraged if they could not bring their case to Moses himself - they could know one of Moses' delegates was able give them counsel from God's wisdom.

d. **Select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth:** This was the next step in effective delegation for Moses.

Delegation fails if the job is not put into the hands of able, godly men. Only particular men were fit for this job:

- Men of ability: **able men**
- Men of godliness: **such as fear God**
- Men of God's Word: **men of truth**
- Men of honor: **hating covetousness**

i. Paul gave the same counsel to Timothy in 2Ti. 2:2: *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

e. **Every great matter they shall bring to you:** For Moses to effectively delegate, he must still have oversight and leadership over those under him. Delegation is the exercise of leadership, not the abandoning of it.

f. **You will be able to endure:** This is the first reward for effective delegation. Moses would enjoy life and be able to do his job better than ever. The second reward was that **all this**

people will also go their place in peace; that is, the people would be effectively ministered to.

i. This method also had the advantage of settling problems quickly because people didn't need to wait in line for Moses. "The longer a controversy lasts, the worse the tangle becomes, the more hot words are spoken, the more bystanders become involved." (Meyer) Jesus said we should agree with our adversary *quickly* (Mat. 5:25).

3. (24-27) Moses follows Jethro's suggestions; Jethro departs. So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged

every small case themselves. Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

a. **Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-**

law and did all that he had said: Moses wisely followed Jethro's counsel, and surely this extended his ministry and made him more effective.

i. "It is better to set a hundred men to work than to do the work of a hundred men." (D.

L. Moody)

b. **Rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:** In Moses' method of

administration, some had a higher position than others. Yet God honored

the faithful service of the **rulers of tens** as much as the service of the **rulers of thousands**.

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2 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife Zipporah after he had sent her back, **3** and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom (for Moses had said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land"), **4** and the other Eliezer (for Moses had said, "The God of my father has been my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").

5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and his wife, came to Moses in the desert where he was camping by the mountain of God. **6** He said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons with her." **7** Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him; they each asked about the other's welfare, and then they went into the tent. **8** Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt for Israel's sake, and all the hardship that had come on them along the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.

9 Jethro rejoiced because of all the good that the LORD had done for Israel, whom he had delivered from the hand of Egypt. **10** Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from the Egyptians' control! **11** Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, for in the thing in which they dealt proudly against them he has destroyed them." **12**

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat food with the father-in-law of Moses before God.

13 On the next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. **14** When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the

people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"

15 Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. **16** When they have a dispute, it comes to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the decrees of God and his laws."

17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good! **18** You will surely wear out, both you and these people who are with you, for this is too heavy a burden for you; you are not able to do it by yourself. **19**

Now listen to me, I will give you advice, and may God be with you: You be a representative for the people to God, and you bring their disputes to God; **20** warn them of the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. **21**

But you choose from the people capable men, God-fearing, men of truth, those who hate bribes, and put them over the people as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. **22** They will judge the people under normal circumstances, and every difficult case they will bring to you, but every small case they themselves will judge, so that you may make it easier for yourself, and they will bear the burden with you. **23** If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will be able to go home satisfied."

24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he had said. **25** Moses chose capable men from all Israel, and he made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. **26** They judged the people under normal circumstances; the difficult cases they would bring to Moses, but every small case they would judge themselves.

27 Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and so Jethro went to his own land.

1 In the third month after the Israelites went out from the land of Egypt, on the very day, they came to the Desert of Sinai.

Guzik - Exodus 19:1-25

Exodus 19 - The Nation of Israel Comes to Mount Sinai

A. Coming to the Mountain.

1. (1-2) Israel camps at Mount Sinai.

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came *to* the Wilderness of Sinai. For they had departed from Rephidim, had come *to* the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

a. **They came to the Wilderness of Sinai:** It took them three months of trusting God to get to this place, but they finally arrived. They saw God's deliverance from Egypt, received His guidance on the way to go, they saw His glorious victory at the Red Sea, they saw God provide food and water miraculously, and they saw a prayerful victory won over the Amalekites.

i. Israel will stay in **the Wilderness of Sinai** until Numbers 10. More than 57

chapters of Scripture are devoted to what

happened to Israel in the year they camped at Mount Sinai.

b. **So Israel camped there before the**

mountain: In one sense, all that went before was meant to bring them to this place. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of what God said in Exo. 3:12: *this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.*

i. Sinai was the place where Moses had his "burning bush" experience with God. The whole nation of Israel would soon

experience some of what Moses had before.

If the people would meet God at this mountain, it could only happen because Moses had already been there. The people could not go farther than their leader.

ii. If the traditional site of Mount Sinai looks like anything, it looks like a huge pulpit - a sudden, steep outcropping of mountain out in the wilderness. Here, God would preach the most dramatic sermon ever heard.

2. (3-6) God declares His great plan for the nation of Israel.

And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles'

wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And you shall be to Me a

kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

a. Moses went up to God, and the LORD

called to him from the mountain: Moses, led by God, went up on the mountain to meet with God as he had before - and the LORD

spoke to Moses again.

b. Thus you shall say to the house of

Jacob: With this title God associated the nation with the weakest and most carnal of the patriarchs. At this point they acted more like **Jacob** than Abraham or Isaac.

c. You have seen what I did to the

Egyptians: God gave a message to Israel through Moses, a message regarding His purpose and destiny for Israel. This destiny was based on what God already did for them in the great deliverance from Egypt.

i. God's love and care was shown for Israel

already, as He **bore you on eagle's**

wings. It is said that an eagle does not carry her young in her claws like other birds; the young eagles attach themselves to the back of the mother eagle and are protected

as they are carried. Any arrow from a hunter must pass through the mother eagle before it could touch the young eagle on her back.

ii. The deliverance (**I bore you on eagles'**

wings) was for fellowship (**brought you to Myself**). God didn't deliver Israel so they could "do their own thing," but so they could be God's people.

d. Then you shall be a special treasure to

Me: God intended for Israel to be **a special treasure** unto Him. He wanted them to be a people with a unique place in God's great plan, a people of great value and concern to God.

i. Paul longed for Christians to know how great a treasure they were to God; he

prayed they would know *what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints* (Eph. 1:18).

e. **You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests:** God intended for Israel to be **a kingdom of priests**, where every believer could come before God themselves, and everyone could represent God to the nations.

i. Peter reminds us we are a *royal priesthood* (1Pe. 2:9), those who serve God as both kings and priests (*and has made us kings*

and priests to His God and Father, Rev. 1:6).

f. **And a holy nation:** God intended for Israel to be **a holy nation**, a nation and people set apart from the rest of the world, the particular possession of God, fit for His purposes.

i. Peter reminds us we are a *holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of*

darkness into His marvelous light (1Pe. 2:9).

As God's people, we must be set apart, thinking and doing differently than others in this world.

g. **If you will indeed obey My voice and**

keep My covenant, then: All this could only be fulfilled if Israel would stay in God's word.

The word **then** is an important word here.

Apart from knowing and doing God's word, God's destiny for the nation would never be fulfilled.

i. **Keep My covenant:** the covenant was greater than the law itself. The covenant God would make with Israel involved law, sacrifice, and the choice to obey and be blessed or to disobey and be cursed.

3. (7-9) The people agree to obey the covenant.

So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words

which the LORD commanded him. Then all the

people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

a. **Laid before them all these words which**

the LORD commanded him: The people will later be challenged to receive the covenant again, after they heard its terms, and they received it again (Exo. 24:1-8).

b. **Moses brought back the words of the**

people to the LORD: Moses here is acting as a true priest, as an intermediary between God and the people; yet, God spoke audibly to the

Moses (**that the people may hear when I**

speak with you) so everyone would know that it was really God speaking to Moses.

4. (10-13) God commands that His holy presence on Sinai be respected.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow*; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

a. **Go to the people and consecrate them**

today and tomorrow: God was going to appear to Israel in spectacular fashion; and before this could happen, the people had to

prepare themselves.

b. You shall set bounds for the people all

around: The coming of God to Mount Sinai did not mean the people were free to go to the mountain and fellowship with God. They had to

keep their distance behind a barrier, and the penalty for failing to keep their distance was death.

i. Any person or animal killed for getting too close would be regarded as so unholy they could not even be touched, they had to be executed with a stones or arrows.

c. You shall set bounds for the people: If there is anything basic to human nature, it is that we need boundaries. In setting these boundaries and providing the death penalty for breaching them, God showed Israel that obedience is more important than their feelings.

We don't doubt that some bold Israelites *felt* like going beyond the boundaries, but they were to submit their feelings to obedience.

d. When the trumpet sounds long: The people could only come near at God's invitation, and the **trumpet** signaled that the invitation was open.

5. (14-15) Commands for ceremonial purity and cleanliness.

So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. And he said to the people,

"Be ready for the third day; do not come near *your* wives."

a. Do not come near your wives: The rest of the Scriptures do not teach that there is any inherent uncleanness in sexual relations. In this situation, God wanted the people to

demonstrate their desire for purity by putting on clean clothes and restraining the flesh.

b. Be ready for the third day: The meeting with God could only come at the third day.

Anyone who tried to meet with God before the third day tried to come before God opened the way.

B. God's presence on the mountain.

1. (16-19) God's terrifying presence on Mount Sinai.

Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp tremble. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

a. **Thunderings and lightnings, and a thick**

cloud: These signs of power and glory signaled the presence of God. The whole environment must have seemed terrifying to the people.

b. **The sound of the trumpet was very**

loud: Beyond all one could see, hear, and feel, then came a long, loud blast of a trumpet, a trumpet coming not from the camp but from

heaven itself - no wonder **all the people who were in the camp trembled.**

c. **Moses brought the people out of the**

camp to meet with God: Then, Moses led the people right up to the barrier at the very foot of Mount Sinai, where they could see, smell, hear, and virtually taste the fire which engulfed the mountain - as well as feel the earth shake under their feet when **the whole mountain quaked greatly.**

d. When the blast of the trumpet sounded

long and became louder and louder: In the midst of all this, the sound of the trumpet blast became longer and louder and longer and louder, until Moses spoke to God - perhaps asking Him to stop.

2. (20) Moses goes up on Mount Sinai to the immediate presence of God.

Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

a. Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain:

God came in a special presence to Mount Sinai, ready to meet with Moses as a representative of the whole nation of Israel.

b. And Moses went up: God **came down**, and **Moses went up**. As the people trembled in terror at the foot of the mountain, Moses needed courage to go to the top and meet with

God. It took courage for Moses to go up in the midst of all the thunder, lightning, earthquakes, fire, and smoke. But Moses knew God not only in terms of this awesome power, but also in

terms of His gracious kindness.

3. (21-25) God tells Moses to go back down and warn the people again about respecting the holiness of His presence on Sinai.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned

us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.'" Then the LORD said to him,

"Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

a. **Go down and warn the people:** Those who through rebellion, curiosity, or raw daring presumed to go up on the mountain would

perish. The glory and greatness of God wasn't to be a matter subjected to scientific inquiry or a way to prove one's own manhood.

b. **The people cannot come up to Mount**

Sinai: Just because God called Moses and Aaron up did not mean there was an open invitation for the whole nation to meet with God on Mount Sinai.

c. **Do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD:**

The whole idea at Sinai was *exclusion*. Exodus 19 gives a powerful picture of the awesome fear each Israelite must have felt at Mount Sinai. It is easy to think that this would inspire them to a holy lifestyle.

i. Many today feel we need to get more of the thunder and fire and trembling of Mount Sinai into people as a way of keeping them from sin. Yet, not forty days from this, the whole nation will be practicing an orgy around a golden calf, praising it as the god that brought them out of Egypt.

ii. As Chadwick says, "Awe is one thing: the submission of the will is another." Israel had plenty of awe, but little submission of their will.

iii. Heb. 12:18-24 tells us loud and clear that under the New Covenant we come to a different mountain, that our salvation and relationship with God is centered at Mount

Zion, not Mount Sinai.

- Sinai speaks of fear and terror, but Zion speaks of love and forgiveness.
- Sinai is in a dry desert, but Zion is the city of the Living God.
- Sinai, with all its fear and power is earthly; but the Mount Zion we come to is heavenly and spiritual.
- At Sinai, only Moses could come and meet God; at Zion, there is an innumerable company, a general assembly.
- Sinai had guilty men in fear, but Zion has just men made perfect.
- At Sinai, Moses is the mediator, but at Zion, Jesus the mediator.
- Sinai put forth an Old covenant, ratified by the blood of animals; Zion has a New Covenant, ratified by the blood of God's precious Son.
- Sinai was all about barriers and exclusion; Zion is all about invitation.
- Sinai is all about Law, Zion is all about grace.

iv. Therefore, we shouldn't come to Zion as if we were coming to Sinai. We must put away our hesitation and get bold in coming to God. Nevertheless there is much for us to learn at Mount Sinai. We learn of God's holy requirements and what we have to do before we can come to Him. In a similar manner to those at Mount Sinai, there are things we must do to meet with God.

- We must receive God's word.
- We must be set apart.
- We must be cleansed.

- We can only come after the third day.
- We must respect God's boundary.
- We must restrain the flesh
- We must know we come to a holy God.

v. "Reader, art thou still under the influence and condemning power of that fiery law which proceeded from his right hand? Art thou yet *afar off*? Remember, thou canst only *come nigh* by the blood of sprinkling; and till justified by his blood, thou are under the *curse*. Consider the terrible majesty of God. If thou have his *favour* thou hast *life*; if his *frown*, *death*. Be instantly reconciled to God, for though thou hast deeply *sinned*, and he is *just*, yet he is the justifier of him that believeth in Christ Jesus. Believe on him, receive his salvation OBEY *his voice*

indeed, and KEEP his *covenant*, and THEN *shalt thou be a king and a priest unto God and the Lamb*, and be finally saved with all the power of an endless life. Amen." (Clarke) © 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** After they journeyed from Rephidim, they came to the Desert of Sinai, and they camped in the desert; Israel camped there in front of the mountain.

3 Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, "Thus you will tell the house of Jacob, and declare to the people of Israel: **4** 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I lifted you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **5** And now, if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then you will be my special possession out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine, **6** and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you will speak to the Israelites."

7 So Moses came and summoned the elders of Israel. He set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him, **8** and all the people answered together, "All that the

LORD has commanded we will do!" So Moses brought the words of the people back to the LORD.

9 The LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and so that they will always believe in you." And Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10 The LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and make them wash their clothes **11** and be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. **12** You must set boundaries for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves not to go up on the mountain nor touch its edge. Whoever touches the mountain will surely be put to death! **13** No hand will touch him – but he will surely be stoned or shot through, whether a beast or a human being; he must not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast they may go up on the mountain."

14 Then Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. **15** He said to the people, "Be ready for the third day. Do not go near your wives."

16 On the third day in the morning there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn; all the people who were in the camp trembled. **17** Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their place at the foot of the mountain. **18** Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently. **19** When the sound of the horn grew louder and louder, Moses was speaking and God was answering him with a voice.

20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. **21** The LORD said to Moses, "Go down and solemnly warn the people, lest they force

their way through to the LORD to look, and many of them perish. **22** Let the priests also, who approach the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break through against them."

23 Moses said to the LORD, "The people are not able to come up to Mount Sinai, because you solemnly warned us, 'Set boundaries for the mountain and set it apart.'" **24** The LORD said to him, "Go, get down, and come up, and Aaron with you, but do not let the priests and the people force their way through to come up to the LORD, lest he break through against them." **25** So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

1 God spoke all these words:

Guzik - Exodus 20:1-26

Exodus 20 - The Ten Commandments

A. Four commandments regarding our conduct before God.

1. (1-3) The first commandment: **no other gods before Me.**

And God spoke all these words, saying: "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.

a. **I am the LORD your God:** Before God commanded anything of man, He declared who He is and what He did for Israel (**who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage**). The foundation is clear: because of who God is, and what He has done for us, He has the right to tell us what to do - and we have the obligation to obey Him.

b. **God spoke all these words:** The following laws were not "invented" here at Mount Sinai. A few aspects of the Mosaic Law brought forth new revelation, but for the most part this simply clearly and definitely lays out God's law as it was written in the heart of man since the time of Adam.

i. In his book *The Abolition of Man*, C.S.

Lewis explains how there certainly is a universal morality among men. He gives

concrete examples of how all cultures in the past were able to agree on the basics of morality because these principles are implanted in the heart of man.

ii. All cultures have said murder is wrong, and kindness is good. All agree that we have particular obligations to our family. All say that honesty is good and that a man cannot have any woman he wants. They agree that stealing is wrong and that justice is good. There are no cultures where cowardice is good and bravery is bad.

iii. Yet in our modern world there has been a massive shift, to the point where 63% of Americans reject the concept of moral absolutes, saying that it all depends on the situation. People think that if there is one case where a lie is justified (say to save the life of someone else), then it is wrong to say that it is wrong to lie.

iv. This thinking goes to absurd lengths. In 1990, media mogul Ted Turner distributed copies of his "10 Voluntary Initiatives," hoping to replace the Ten Commandments.

c. **You shall have no other gods before Me:** The first commandment logically flows from understanding who God is and what He has

done for us. Nothing is to come **before** God and He is the only God we worship and serve.

i. In the days of ancient Israel, there was great temptation to worship the gods of materialism (Baal, the god of weather and financial success) and sex (Ashtoreth, the goddess of sex, romance, and reproduction), or any number of other local deities. We are tempted to worship the same gods, but without the old-fashioned names and

images.

d. **No other gods before Me:** This does not imply that it is permissible to have other gods, as long as they line up behind the true God.

Instead the idea is that there are to be no other gods before the sight of the true God in our life. **Before Me** is literally, "to My face".

i. This means God demands to be more than "added" to our lives. We don't just add Jesus to the life we already have. We must give Him all our lives.

ii. Failure to obey this commandment is called *idolatry*. We are to flee idolatry (1Co. 10:14). Those lives marked by habitual idolatry will not inherit the kingdom of God (1Co. 6:9-10, Eph. 5:5, Rev. 21:8, 22:15).

Idolatry is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-20), which marks our old life instead of the new (1Pe. 4:3), and we are not to associate with those who call themselves Christians who are idolaters (1Co. 5:11).

2. (4-6) The second commandment: **You shall not make for yourself any carved image . . . you shall not bow down to them.**

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

a. **You shall not make for yourself a carved image:** The second commandment prohibits not only idolatry regarding false gods, it also deals with making an image of any created thing which we might worship.

b. Or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth

beneath: In that day as well as in our own, worship was tied closely with images - idealized images, or even images in the mind of man.

God will not allow us to depict Him with any such image, nor replace Him with another image.

i. The second commandment doesn't forbid making an image of something for artistic purposes; God Himself commanded Israel make images of cherubim (Exo. 25:18, 26:31). It forbids the making of images as an "aid" to worship.

ii. "To countenance its *image worship*, the *Roman Catholic Church* has left the whole of this second commandment out of the decalogue, and thus lost one whole commandment out of the *ten*; but to keep up the *number* they have divided the *tenth* into *two*." (Clarke) iii. Joh. 4:24 explains the rationale behind

the second commandment: *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*. The use of images and other material things as a focus or "help" to worship denies who God is (*Spirit*) and how we must worship Him (*in spirit and truth*).

iv. Paul reminds us of the futility of trying to make God into our own image: *Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things*.

(Rom. 1:22-23)

c. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous

God: How can it be said that God is a **jealous God**? "God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us

all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life . . .

God is not jealous *of* us: He is jealous *for* us." (Redpath) d.

Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me: This

does not mean God punishes us directly for the sins of our ancestors. The important words are **of those who hate Me** - if the descendants love God, they will not have the iniquity of the fathers visited on them.

i. "This necessarily implies - IF *the children walk in the steps of their fathers*; for no man can be condemned by Divine justice for a crime of which he was never guilty." (Clarke) ii. Yet, the focus here is on idolatry, and this refers to judgment on a *national* scale -

nations that forsake the LORD will be judged, and that judgment will have effects throughout generations.

3. (7) The third commandment: **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

a. **You shall not take the name of the**

LORD your God in vain: We can break the third commandment through *profanity* (using the name of God in blasphemy and cursing), *frivolity* (using the name of God in a superficial, stupid way), and *hypocrisy* (claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces Him).

i. . Jesus communicated the idea of this command in the disciple's prayer, when He taught us to have a regard for the holiness of God's name (*Hallowed be Your name*, Mat. 6:9).

b. **For the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain:** The strength of this command has led to

strange traditions among the Jewish people. Some go to extreme

lengths in attempting to fulfill this command, refusing to even write out the name of God, in the fear that the paper might be destroyed and the name of God be written **in vain**.

4. (8-11) The fourth commandment: **Remember the Sabbath day.**

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

a. **Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it**

holy: The seventh day (Saturday) was commanded to be respected as a day of rest.

This rest was for all of Israel - servants and slaves as well as visitors.

i. This is an important principle that might be too easily passed over. Here God declared the essential humanity and dignity of women, slaves, and strangers, and said they had the same right to a day of rest as the free Israeli man. This was certainly a radical concept in the ancient world.

b. **To keep it holy:** In their traditions, the Jewish people came to carefully quantify what they thought could and could not be done on the Sabbath day, in order to **keep it holy**.

i. For example, in Luk. 6:1-2, in the mind of the Jewish leaders, the disciples were guilty of four violations of the Sabbath every time they took a bite of grain out in the field,

because they reaped, threshed, winnowed, and prepared food.

ii. Ancient Rabbis taught that on the Sabbath, a man could not carry something in his right hand or in his left hand, across his chest or on his shoulder. But he could carry something with the back of his hand, his foot, his elbow, or in his ear, his hair, or in the hem of his shirt, or in his shoe or sandal.

Or, on the Sabbath, you Israelites were forbidden to tie a knot - except, a woman could tie a knot in her girdle. So, if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well, an Israelite could not tie a rope to the bucket, but a woman could tie her girdle to the bucket and pull it up from the well.

iii. In observant Jewish homes today, one cannot turn on a light, a stove, or a switch on the Sabbath. It is forbidden to drive a certain distance or to make a telephone call - all carefully regulated by traditions seeking to spell out the law exactly.

c. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth: God established the pattern for the Sabbath at the time of creation.

When He rested from His works on the seventh day, God made the seventh day a day of rest from all our works (Gen. 2:3). But the most important purpose of the Sabbath was to serve as a shadow of the rest we have in Jesus.

i. Some claim that Christians are required to keep the Sabbath today. But the New Testament makes it clear that Christians are not under obligation to observe a Sabbath day (Col. 2:16-17 and Gal. 4:9-11), because Jesus fulfilled the purpose and plan of the

Sabbath *for* us and *in* us (Heb. 4:9-11).

ii. Gal. 4:10 tells us that Christians are not bound to observe *days and months and seasons and years*. The rest we enter into as Christians is something to experience every day, not just one day a week - the rest of knowing we don't have to work to save ourselves, but our salvation is accomplished in Jesus (Heb. 4:9-10).

iii. The Sabbath commanded here and observed by Israel was a *shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ* (Col. 2:16-17). We have a rest in Jesus that is ours to live in every day. Therefore, since the shadow of the Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus, we are free to keep any day - or no day - as a Sabbath after the custom of ancient Israel.

iv. However, though we are free from the legal obligation of the Sabbath, we dare not ignore the importance of a day of rest - God has built us so that we *need* one. Like a car that needs regular maintenance, we need regular rest - or we will not "wear" well.

Some people are like high mileage cars that haven't been maintained well, and it shows.

v. Some Christians are also dogmatic about observing Saturday as the Sabbath as opposed to Sunday. But because we are free to regard all days as given to God, it makes no difference. But in some ways, Sunday is more appropriate; being the day Jesus rose from the dead (Mar. 16:9), and first met with His disciples (Joh. 20:19), and a day when Christians gathered for fellowship (Act. 20:7 and 1Co. 16:2). Under Law, men worked towards God's rest; but after Jesus'

finished work on the cross, the believer enters into rest and goes from that rest out to work.

vi. But we are also commanded to *work* six days. "He who idles his time away in the *six* days is equally culpable in the sight of God as he who works on the *seventh*." (Clarke) Many Christians should give more "leisure time" to the work of the LORD. Every Christian should have a *deliberate* was to serve God and advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

B. Six commandments regarding our conduct before God and man.

1. (12) The fifth commandment: **Honor your father and your mother.**

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

a. **Honor your father and your mother:**

Honor for fathers and mothers is an essential building block for the stability and health of all society. If the younger generations are constantly at war with older generations, the foundations of society will be destroyed.

i. Jesus used the way the Pharisees interpreted this commandment as an example of how one might keep the law with a limited interpretation, yet violate the spirit of the commandment (Mat. 15:3-6).

b. **That your days may be long:** In Eph. 6:2 Paul repeated this command, emphasizing the promise stated here: **that your days may be long upon the land.** Rebellion is costly, and many have paid a high price personally for their rebellion against their parents.

2. (13) The sixth commandment: **You shall not murder.**

"You shall not murder.

a. **You shall not murder:** Some wonder how God can approve both capital punishment (Exo. 19:12) and this prohibition of murder. The simple answer is that in Hebrew as well as English, there is a distinction between *to kill* and *to murder*. As opposed to killing, **murder** is the taking of life without legal justification (execution after due process) or moral justification (killing in defense).

b. **You shall not murder:** Jesus carefully explained the heart of this commandment. He showed that it also prohibits us from hating someone else (Mat. 5:21-26), because we can wish someone dead in our hearts, yet never have the "courage" to commit the deed. Someone may not kill from a lack of courage or initiative, though his or her heart is filled with hatred.

3. (14) The seventh commandment: **You shall not commit adultery.**

"You shall not commit adultery.

a. **You shall not commit adultery:** Recognize that the *act itself* is condemned. God allows no justification for the ways that many people often seek to justify extra-marital sex, such as saying "my partner doesn't understand me" or "we are in love" or "God led us to be with each other" or any other excuse.

i. Michael English, who lost his recording contract and marriage over adultery with another Christian music singer, says of his adultery and its aftermath: "Maybe God allowed this to happen to make me see I needed some freedom." *No!*

b. **You shall not commit adultery:** The New Testament clearly condemns adultery: *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication uncleanness, licentiousness . . .* (Gal. 5:19). But more than the act itself, Jesus carefully explained the heart of this commandment. It

prohibits us from looking *at a woman to lust for her*, where we commit adultery in our heart or mind, yet may not have the courage or opportunity to do the act (Mat. 5:27-30). We aren't innocent just because we didn't have the opportunity to sin the way we really wanted to.

4. (15) The eighth commandment: **You shall not steal.**

"You shall not steal.

a. **Not steal:** This command is another important foundation for human society, establishing the right to personal property. God has clearly entrusted certain possessions to certain individuals, and other people or states are not permitted to take that property without due process of law.

b. **Not steal:** We can also steal from God. Of course, this demands we honor God with our financial resources, so we are not guilty of

robbing Him (Mal. 3:8-10). But we can also rob God by refusing to give Him ourselves for

obedience and His service, because He bought

us and owns us: *knowing that you were not*

redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ (1Pe. 1:18-19); *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's* (1Co. 6:20).

c. **Not steal:** Eph. 4:28 gives the solution to stealing. *Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*

5. (16) The ninth commandment: **You shall not bear false witness.**

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

a. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor:** We can break the ninth commandment through slander, talebearing, creating false impressions, by silence, by

questioning the motives behind someone's actions, or even by flattery.

i. "Slander . . . is a lie invented and spread with intent to do harm. That is the worst

form of injury a person can do to another.

Compared to one who does this, a gangster is a gentleman, and a murderer is kind, because he ends life in a moment with a stroke and with little pain. But the man guilty of slander ruins a reputation which may never be regained, and causes lifelong suffering." (Redpath)

ii. "Talebearing . . . is repeating a report about a person without careful investigation.

Many, many times I have known what it is to suffer with that. To repeat a story which brings discredit and dishonor to another person without making sure of the facts, is breaking this commandment . . . How many people, especially Christian people, revel in this, and delight in working havoc by telling tales about others. To excuse the action by saying they believed the report to be true, or that there was no intention to malign, is no justification." (Redpath)

iii. What about inappropriate silence? "When someone utters a falsity about another and a third person is present who knows that statement to be untrue but, for reasons of fear or being disliked, remains quiet, that third person is as guilty of breaking this law as if he had told a lie." (Redpath)

b. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor:** The New Testament puts it simply. *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds* (Col.

3:9) "How very strange that we have ever come to think that Christian maturity is shown by the ability to speak our minds, whereas it is really expressed in controlling our tongues." (Redpath) i. "What a startling revelation it would be if a tape recording could be played of all that every church member has said about his

fellow members in one week!" (Redpath)

ii. Satan is always there to encourage a lie

(Joh. 8:44; Act. 5:3); and Jesus Himself was

the victim of *false witness* (Mar. 14:57); in some ways, we might say this was the sin that sent Jesus to the cross.

6. (17) The tenth commandment: **You shall not covet.**

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

a. **You shall not covet:** All the first nine commands focus more on things we do; the tenth deals straight with the heart and its desires.

i. Literally, the word for "**covet**" here means

"to pant after." Covetousness works like this: the eyes look upon an object, the mind

admires it, the will goes over to it, and the

body moves in to possess it. Just because

you have not taken the final step does not

mean you are not in the process of coveting right now.

b. **Your neighbor's house . . . wife . . . ox . .**

. **donkey:** Covetousness can be expressed towards all sorts of things; it is the itch to have and to possess what someone else has. It speaks of a dissatisfaction with what we have, and a jealousy towards those who have something "better."

i. Heb. 13:5 puts it well: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For*

He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

ii. This last commandment is closely connected with the first commandment against idolatry: *For this you know, that no*

. . covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph. 5:5).

iii. Jesus gave a special warning about covetousness, which explained the core philosophy of the covetous heart: *And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."* (Luk. 12:15)

C. Thoughts on the Ten Commandments and the system of law in general.

1. The purpose of the law was not to give us a standard we could achieve, and then be counted righteous before God. The purpose of the law was first to show us God's perfect standard, and second, to show how it is impossible for any of us to obey that standard.

a. The law is a schoolmaster to us (Gal. 3:22-25). Before God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ was fully evident, we were *kept under guard by the law* - both in the sense of being bound by the law, but also held in protective custody.

b. The law, through its revelation of God's character and its exposure of our sin, prepares us to come to Jesus - but after we have come, we no longer have to live under our tutor (though we remember the behavior he has taught us).

c. If someone doesn't present the law in a manner that brings people to faith in Jesus, they aren't presenting the law properly - the way Jesus Himself presented it (Mat. 5:17-48).

2. Are the Ten Commandments valid for today?

Certainly, each of the ten are, because they reflect the unchanging nature of God.

a. Each of the Ten Commandments is referred to in the New Testament, including the Sabbath - which is not disregarded, but understood to have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

b. Jesus fulfilled the law for us, so we could obey it in Him: *That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* (Rom. 8:4) i. "The great message of the Christian faith is, therefore, that we are free from the Law's condemnation in order that we may be able to fulfill its obligation by the power of

[Jesus] within us." (Redpath)

ii. "My obedience therefore is not legal, but inspired by love and empowered by God's

Holy Spirit. Does New Testament grace allow

a lower standard than Old Testament law?

The standard under grace is

higher." (Redpath)

3. The Ten Commandments can be condensed, and were by Jesus.

a. In Mat. 22:36-40, Jesus explained that all the law - including the Ten Commandments - can

be fulfilled by loving God with every thing we are and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

i. The key to obedience is therefore the love of God in our lives - something the law itself could not give, but Jesus Christ does.

ii. Knowing the law, how we cannot obey it perfectly, and how we need the love of God to do so should drive us to the love of God:

Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good

conscience, and from sincere faith. (1Ti. 1:5) b. All six commandments relating to our conduct towards other

people can be summed up in love; love fulfills the law and the

commandments. (Rom. 13:8-10)

4. There is also a sense in which the law "excites" sin within us. I didn't know how to "really" rebel against God until He told me His standard (Rom.

7:8-9). This doesn't mean the law is bad, but it does mean that it, in itself, cannot save me from sin.

a. This doesn't make the law evil; it simply shows how evil I am - capable of taking something as good and holy as God's law and using it as a prompting to evil.

5. When Jesus taught on the law and its true meaning (Mat. 5:17-48), He made several things clear:

a. Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Mat. 5:17).

b. Doing and teaching the law is important until the end of time (Mat. 5:19).

c. To be saved, we must have a righteousness that exceeds the scrupulous law-keeping of the scribes and Pharisees (Mat. 5:20).

d. The law must be kept in its full spirit and intent, not in its letter only (Mat. 5:21-47).

e. The law presents us God's perfect standard, and it requires this perfection from us (Mat. 5:48).

i. If a man could live the way Jesus has told us to in this chapter, he would truly be perfect. He would never hate, slander or speak evil of another person. He would never lust in his heart or mind, and not covet anything. He would never make a false oath, and always be completely truthful. He would let God defend his personal rights, and not take it upon himself to defend those rights. He would always love his neighbors,

and even his enemies!

ii. Such a man would truly have a righteousness greater than the scribe and the Pharisees (Mat. 5:20), the very thing we must have to enter into God's Kingdom.

iii. But there is only one man who has lived like this: Jesus Christ. What about the rest of us? Are we left out of the Kingdom of God?

iv. Jesus has demonstrated we need a righteousness apart from the law: *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.* (Rom. 3:21-22) D. The nation's great fear of the presence of God.

1. (18) The people stand afar off.

Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off.

a. **All the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning:** Awesome sights and sounds coming from Mount Sinai accompanied the delivery of the law. This

impressive delivery did nothing to draw the people closer to God; it only made them stand **afar off**.

2. (19) The request of the people.

Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

a. **You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us:** Thus far, the giving of the law had one of its intended effects - showing us just how far man falls short of

God's glory. The people of Israel, from both the content of the law and the display of God's

glory, knew that God was perfect and holy and they were not.

i. Sadly, at a later time, Israel interpreted the law to make it "keepable," and removed the heart and intent of the law (Mat. 5:17-48). This progressed to the point where Saul of Tarsus said of himself, *concerning the righteousness which is in the law, [I was counted] blameless* (Phi. 3:6).

b. **Lest we die:** Coming close to God made them afraid of His holy power; they feared they would die if it continued.

i. This is a typical reaction of those who came into the presence of God, such as Isaiah, who felt *undone* before God (Isa. 6:1-5) and John, who fell as a dead man before the Lord (Rev. 1:17).

c. **Let not God speak with us:** They didn't want God to speak directly to them anymore, as He spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai. Instead, they wanted Moses to mediate between them and God.

i. Man's desire for a mediator - someone to act as a go-between with us a God - is only good if it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, *for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1Ti. 2:5).

3. (20) The purpose for this fear.

And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

a. **Do not fear; for God has come to test**

you: Fear can keep us from sin for a while, but will usually fade in its power over time. The fear Israel experienced here at Mount Sinai faded enough over 40 days so that they danced

around a golden calf, proclaiming it as the God that brought them out of Egypt.

b. That His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin: Though it is better to obey God out of fear than to disobey Him, God's ultimate motivation for obedience is love. This is clear from 1Jo. 4:18-19: *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.*

4. (21) Moses draws near.

So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*.

a. So the people stood afar off, but Moses

drew near: Moses had a relationship with God the common man in Israel did not have.

Through the circumstances of his life and the direct revelation of God, Moses was aware of both God's holy power and also of God's glorious grace.

b. Moses drew near the thick darkness

where God was: Moses knew what it was to be guilty and forgiven by God, and he knew what it was to be used because of grace. Moses remembered that if God was interested in killing him, He could have done it a long time before this.

E. Laws concerning worship and altars.

1. (22-23) The purity of worship.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make *anything to be* with Me; gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.

a. You have seen that I have talked with

you from heaven: The laws to follow are much more than God's "house rules." They are founded on who He is and how He reveals Himself to His people.

b. You shall not make anything to be with

Me; gods of silver or gods of gold: The giving of the law begins with keeping the heart pure in worship. If our worship can be corrupted, it eventually touches every other area of our lives for evil.

2. (24-26) Instructions for altars and sacrifice.

'An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

a. **An altar of earth you shall make for Me:** God did not need an ornate or elaborate altar; **an altar of earth** was sufficient.

i. Of course, with God's ultimate altar, a few wooden beams were sufficient.

b. **You shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings:** The distinction between **burnt offerings** and **peace offerings** will be given in greater detail later. Yet the mere mention of them at the outset of the giving of the law indicates that man cannot keep the law, and must have sacrifice to deal with this inability.

c. **I will bless you:** This is a promise first mentioned in connection with atoning sacrifice.

Though there is blessing in keeping the law, we ultimately are only blessed by the law if we keep the entire law - therefore we seek and find blessing from God on the basis of His atoning sacrifice.

d. **You shall not build it of hewn stone:** If an altar were made of stone, God did not want the glory of the stone carver to be the center of attention at His altar. God, at His altar, wanted to share glory with no man - the beauty and attractiveness would be found only in the

provision of God, not in any fleshly display.

e. Nor shall you go up by steps: God

wanted *no* display of human flesh at His place of covering sacrifice. Steps might allow the leg of the priest to be seen. God doesn't want to see our flesh in worship.

i. What God *does* want from us in worship is seen by Jesus' statement in Joh. 4:24: *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.* God wants worship that is characterized by *Spirit* (as opposed to flesh) and *truth* (as opposed to deception or mere feeling).

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below. **5** You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me, **6** and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold guiltless anyone who takes his name in vain.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy. **9**

For six days you may labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the resident foreigner who is in your gates.

11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on

the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that you may live a long time in the land the LORD your God is giving to you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

18 All the people were seeing the thundering and the lightning, and heard the sound of the horn, and saw the mountain smoking – and when the people saw it they trembled with fear and kept their distance. **19** They said to Moses, “You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us, lest we die.” **20** Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you so that you do not sin.”

21 The people kept their distance, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

22 The LORD said to Moses: “Thus you will tell the Israelites: ‘You yourselves have seen that I have spoken with you from heaven. **23** You must not make gods of silver alongside me, nor make gods of gold for yourselves.

24 ‘You must make for me an altar made of earth, and you will sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. In every place where I cause my name to be honored I will come to you and I will bless you. **25** If you make me an altar of stone, you must not build it of stones shaped with tools, for if you use your tool on it you have defiled it. **26** And you must not go up by steps to my altar, so that your nakedness is not exposed.’

1 “These are the decisions that you will set before them:
Guzik - Exodus 21:1-36

Exodus 21 - Laws To Direct Judges

A. Laws regarding servitude.

1. (1) **These are the judgments.**

"Now these *are* the judgments which you shall set before them:

a. **Which you shall set before them:** These next three chapters present laws establishing precedent for the legal system of Israel, the judges appointed by Moses.

2. (2-4) The general law concerning Hebrew slaves (indentured servants).

"If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he *comes in* married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

a. **If you buy a Hebrew servant:** "The first words of God from Sinai had declared that He was Jehovah Who brought them out of slavery.

And in this remarkable code, the first person whose rights are dealt with is the slave." (Chadwick)

b. **A Hebrew servant:** There were four basic ways a Hebrew might become a slave to another Hebrew.

- In extreme poverty, they might sell their liberty (Lev. 25:39).

- A father might sell his children into servitude (Exo. 21:7).

- In the case of bankruptcy, a man might become servant to his creditors (2Ki. 4:1).

- If a thief had nothing with which to pay proper restitution (Exo. 22:3-4).

c. **He shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay**

nothing: In such cases, the servitude was never obligated to be life-long. The Hebrew servant worked for six years and then was set

free. At the end of the six years, went out with what he came in with. If the master provided a wife (and therefore children), the wife and children had to stay with the master or be

redeemed.

3. (5-6) The bond-slave: a willing slave for life.

"But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'

then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the

doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

a. **But if the servant plainly says, "I love my master" :**

If, after the six years of servitude, a servant wished to make a life-long commitment to his master - in light of the master's goodness and his blessings for the servant - he could, through this ceremony, make a life-long commitment to his master.

i. This commitment was not motivated by debt or obligation, only by love for the master.

b. **His master shall pierce his ear with an**

awl: In the ceremony, the servant's ear would be pierced - opened - with an awl, in the presence of witnesses - then, **he shall serve him for ever.**

i. Psa. 40:6 speaks of this ceremony taking

place between the Father and the Son,

where the Psalmist spoke prophetically for

the Messiah: *Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened.* Jesus was a perfect bond-slave to the Father (Phi.

2:7).

c. **He shall serve him forever:** Jesus gave us the right to be called *friends* instead of *servants* (Joh. 15:15). Yet the writers of the New Testament found plenty of glory in simply being considered *bondservants* of Jesus (Rom. 1:1; Jam. 1:1; 2Pe. 1:1; Jud. 1:1).

i. Pagans had a custom of branding the slave with the name or the sign of the owner. Paul referred to himself as just such a slave in Gal. 6:17: *From now on, let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*. Paul was a slave for life to Jesus.

4. (7-11) The rights of female maid-servants.

"And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do.

If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes another *wife*, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without *paying* money.

a. **If a man sells his daughter to be a female slave:** The maid-servant was bought, but not really to be a slave, but to be the master's wife or the wife of the master's son one day.

b. **He shall let her be redeemed:** If her master did not marry her, or decided not to give her to his son, the master was still obligated to respect her rights under God's law.

c. **He shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights:** The idea of women - and women of lower classes - having such rights, respected by God and society was revolutionary in an age when

women were usually regarded as property.

B. Laws regarding violence and disability.

1. (12-14) Appropriate punishment for both murder and manslaughter.

"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered *him* into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.

But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

a. **He who strikes a man so that he dies**

shall surely be put to death: The principle for capital punishment goes back to Gen. 9:6: *Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.* The right for the state to wield the sword of execution is also stated in the New Testament (Rom. 13:3-4).

b. **If he did not lie in wait . . . if a man acts with premeditation:** The issue is clearly one of **premeditation** and **treachery**. God did not place crimes of passion or neglect on the same plane as crimes of **premeditation** and **treachery**.

c. **You shall take him from My altar, that**

he may die: The principle of punishing murderers is so important to God that He denied murderers refuge at His **altar**.

i. God said also that unpunished murderers

defiled the land: *Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death . . . So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I*

the LORD dwell among the children of Israel. (Num. 35:31, 33-34) ii. Therefore, there must be no mercy towards the "first-degree" murderer. **You shall take him from My altar, that he may die** refers to a practice common

among many pagan cultures, where a criminal - even a murderer - could find refuge at the altar of a god, and as long as he stayed in the temple, he was given sanctuary. God here says that even if a first-degree murderer comes to His altar, he is to be punished.

d. **Then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee:** Later (Numbers 35 and Joshua 20) God commanded and Israel made cities of refuge - **a place where he may flee** -

cities where one could flee in a case of manslaughter, and be protected until his case was properly heard.

2. (15-17) Laws concerning murder of a parent.

"And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death. And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

a. **He who strikes his father or mother: Strikes** must be taken in the context of Exo.

21:12, which says *He who strikes a man so that he dies.* A child who murders, or attempts the murder of a parent, is to receive capital punishment.

b. **He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death:** Kidnapping was also considered a capital offense. In the eyes of God, criminally enslaving a man was not far from murdering him.

c. **He who curses his father or his mother**

shall surely be put to death: The idea is of an adult child who threatens their parent.

Though this law is severe, it preserves a critical foundation for civilized society: respect between generations.

i. It also has a built-in protection for the rights of the child, according to Deu. 21:18-21. This passage states that the parent did not have the right to carry out this punishment, but they had to bring the accused child before the elders and judges of the city. This meant that the parent - against all contemporary custom - did not have the absolute power of life and death over their children. As a practical matter, the judges of Israel rarely if ever administered the death penalty in such cases, yet the child was held accountable.

ii. Yet the law discouraging conflict between generations is important. The elder generation, as they grow older, is at the mercy of the younger generation. If the younger generation is allowed to carry on open warfare with the older generation, the very foundations of society are shaken.

iii. Unfortunately, modern euthanasia laws allow murder of the older generation by the younger generation - all approved by law.

3. (18-19) Regarding compensation for personal injury.

"If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with *his* fist, and he does not die but is confined to *his* bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck *him* shall be acquitted. He shall only pay *for* the loss of his time, and shall provide *for him* to be thoroughly healed.

a. **If men contend with each other, and**

one strikes the other: If, because of a conflict, a man is unable to work (**confined to his bed**) because of an injury received at the hand of another, the one who injured him must pay compensation to the man and his family.

b. If he rises again and walks about

outside with his staff: However, if the man can recover from the injury, the guilty party was only required to pay for his medical recovery and for his lost time.

c. And shall provide for him to be

thoroughly healed: Though these principles have been abused by the greedy in our modern day, the principles themselves still stand.

4. (20-21) Regarding the beating and death of a servant.

"And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he *is* his property.

a. So that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished: This shows that in ancient Israel servants could be "murdered." In other cultures, the master was held blameless if he murdered a servant, because the servant was not considered a person.

b. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a

day or two, he shall not be punished: Yet the master **not be punished** if the servant did not die immediately. Perhaps this is a way to determine intent, with the idea that if the

servant lived for several days, it was an indication that the master must not have intended to murder him.

i. If the slave died, the loss of property was thought to be penalty enough to the master.

c. He shall surely be punished . . . he is his property:

These laws together paint a picture of the ideas behind slavery in ancient Israel. A servant was a person (who could not be murdered), yet they were also considered the

property of the master.

i. Spiritually speaking, we are the property of whom we serve. We are either slaves to Satan or to Jesus Christ.

5. (22-25) Laws of retribution.

"If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm

follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*. But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

a. He shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him:

This is an example of a case of retribution, where a pregnant woman is injured in a conflict, and she gives birth prematurely. A penalty is only to be assessed if there is lasting damage.

i. If no lasting damage results, there are no damages awarded. Here, God recognizes that some bad things just happen, and we get over them - and move on.

b. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye: If lasting damage results, retribution is always limited by the **eye for an eye** principle. This law was meant to block our desire for vengeance, and not given as a license for revenge.

i. Our tendency is to want to do *more* to the offending party than what they have done to us. This principle can apply to our modern

practice of assessing huge punitive damages in lawsuits, and this law presents the principle that only the loss itself is to be compensated.

6. (26-27) The law of retribution as it regards masters and servants.

"If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

a. If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall

let him go free for the sake of his eye: The principle of *eye for an eye* has a different application for servants. The servant, if injured by the master, received something more precious than an eye - his freedom.

b. If he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free: "If this did not teach them *humanity*, it taught them *caution*, as one rash blow might have deprived them of all right to the future services of the slave; and this self-interest obliged them to be cautious and circumspect." (Clarke) C. Laws regarding animal control and damage.

1. (28-32) Determining guilt when an animal kills a human.

"If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be* acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. If there is imposed on him a sum of

money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

a. The ox shall surely be stoned . . . but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted: This law illustrates the

principle of *intent* and *neglect*. An owner of a man-killing ox cannot be held guilty if the animal had no history of aggression towards people - yet the animal must die, and the owner is forbidden to profit from the animal or its death (**its flesh shall not be eaten**).

b. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past . . . the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death:

Yet, if an ox owner has an ox whom he knows to be aggressive, and he fails to control the animal, he shall be held guilty of murder and punished as such.

c. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life:

It seems that if the survivors of the dead man accepted monetary restitution in lieu of the owner's death, this was an acceptable settlement.

d. Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him:

The same principles must be applied even if a minor is killed. They were regarded as people with rights to respect as well as adults.

e. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master

thirty shekels of silver: If a servant was killed under such circumstances, the price of restitution was **thirty shekels of silver**, which was considered the price of a slave.

i. Significantly, this was the same price Jesus was "sold" for. Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Mat. 26:15).

2. (33-36) More laws giving the principle of negligence and restitution.

"And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, the owner of the pit shall make *it* good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead *animal* shall be his. If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead *ox* they shall also divide. Or if it

was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.

a. He shall give money to their owner, but

the dead animal shall be his: These laws communicate the principle of "you-break-it-you-bought-it." If your negligence resulted in the death of your neighbor's animal, you were obligated to recompense your neighbor.

b. If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it: These laws required the investigation and analysis of

judges, so that the application of the law took into account findings of intent and negligence.

There is a sense in which these are simply amplifications of the principle, "do what is fair."

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he will go out free without paying anything. **3** If he came in by himself he will go out by himself; if he had a wife when he came in, then his wife will go out with him. **4** If his master gave him a wife, and she bore sons or daughters, the wife and the children will belong to her master, and he will go out by himself. **5** But if the servant should declare, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' **6** then his master must bring him to the judges, and he will bring him to the door or the doorposts, and his master will pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.

7 "If a man sells his daughter as a female servant, she will not go out as the male servants do. **8** If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreign nation, because he has dealt deceitfully with her. **9** If he designated her for his son, then he will deal with her according to the customary rights of daughters. **10** If he

takes another wife, he must not diminish the first one's food, her clothing, or her marital rights. **11** If he does not provide her with these three things, then she will go out free, without paying money.

12 "Whoever strikes someone so that he dies must surely be put to death. **13** But if he does not do it with premeditation, but it happens by accident, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. **14** But if a man willfully attacks his neighbor to kill him cunningly, you will take him even from my altar that he may die.

15 "Whoever strikes his father or his mother must surely be put to death.

16 "Whoever kidnaps someone and sells him, or is caught still holding him, must surely be put to death.

17 "Whoever treats his father or his mother disgracefully must surely be put to death.

18 "If men fight, and one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with his fist and he does not die, but must remain in bed, **19** and then if he gets up and walks about outside on his staff, then the one who struck him is innocent, except he must pay for the injured person's loss of time and see to it that he is fully healed.

20 "If a man strikes his male servant or his female servant with a staff so that he or she dies as a result of the blow, he will surely be punished. **21** However, if the injured servant survives one or two days, the owner will not be punished, for he has suffered the loss.

22 "If men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely, but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman's husband demands of him, and he will pay what the court decides. **23** But if there is serious injury, then you will give a life for a life, **24** eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, **25** burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

26 “If a man strikes the eye of his male servant or his female servant so that he destroys it, he will let the servant go free as compensation for the eye. **27** If he knocks out the tooth of his male servant or his female servant, he will let the servant go free as compensation for the tooth.

28 “If an ox gores a man or a woman so that either dies, then the ox must surely be stoned and its flesh must not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will be acquitted. **29** But if the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner was warned, and he did not take the necessary precautions, and then it killed a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned and the man must be put to death. **30** If a ransom is set for him, then he must pay the redemption for his life according to whatever amount was set for him. **31** If the ox gores a son or a daughter, the owner will be dealt with according to this rule. **32** If the ox gores a male servant or a female servant, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver, and the ox must be stoned.

33 “If a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, **34** the owner of the pit must repay the loss. He must give money to its owner, and the dead animal will become his. **35** If the ox of one man injures the ox of his neighbor so that it dies, then they will sell the live ox and divide its proceeds, and they will also divide the dead ox. **36** Or if it is known that the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner did not take the necessary precautions, he must surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal will become his.

1 (21:37) “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and kills it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox, and four sheep for the one sheep.

Guzik - Exodus 22:1-31

Exodus 22 - More Laws to Direct Judges

A. Laws regarding personal property and restitution.

1. (1-4) Restitution required in cases of theft.

"If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, *there shall be* no guilt for his bloodshed. If the sun has risen on him, *there shall be* guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double.

a. **He shall restore:** The Mosaic Law did not send a person to jail because of theft. Instead, the thief was simply required to **restore** what he stole, plus an additional penalty.

i. In this passage, the penalty could be anywhere from 500% (**he shall restore five oxen for an ox**) to 200% (**he shall restore double**).

ii. This can be regarded as a *positive* vision for the punishment of criminals, putting them to productive restitution and compensating the victims of their theft.

These principles are often ignored in modern judicial systems.

b. **He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his**

theft: If the person was unable to pay back what he stole, the thief was sold as an indentured laborer, with the money from the sale going to the victim.

c. **If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his**

bloodshed: A property owner had the right to protect his property with force - but only with *reasonable* force. The assumption was that if it was daylight, the property owner had the ability to defend himself short of lethal force.

2. (5-8) Further application of the principle of restitution.

"If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is

stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges *to see* whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods.

a. **If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution:** The owner of an animal was responsible for the grazing of his animals. He was obliged to respect his neighbor's property (the grazing land).

b. **He who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution:** Restitution was also required in cases of vandalism or foolish negligence, even if one kept the property of another. In the Mosaic legal system, a great premium was put on personal responsibility, even with the property of others.

i. This translates into a proper concern for the property of others today. A Christian, if he backs into someone else's car, will certainly leave a note and make good the damage. A Christian will have proper insurance, guaranteeing they can compensate for someone else's loss.

ii. If someone gives you something to hold for them you are responsible for it as a faithful steward or manager. This includes

what God gives us to manage or steward for Him.

c. Shall surely make restitution . . . he

shall pay double: Restitution was paid according to a pre-determined amount or percentage; it was not left to the whims of the victims or the judges.

3. (9-13) More application of the principle of restitution.

"For any kind of trespass, *whether it concerns* an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, *or* for any kind of lost thing which *another* claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; *and* whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor. If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing *it*, " *then* an oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept *that*, and he shall not make *it* good. But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. If it is torn to pieces *by a beast*, *then* he shall bring it as evidence, *and* he shall not make good what was torn.

a. The cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whomever the

judges condemn shall pay double: When testimony was given, a man's word was taken as true unless proven otherwise. This is basis of the legal principle of the accused being innocent unless proven guilty.

b. Then an oath of the LORD shall be

between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and

the owner of it shall accept that: The New Testament makes it clear that believers should avoid taking legal disputes among themselves to secular judges. They should allow the matter to be judged by the church (1Co. 6:1-8).

4. (14-15) Restitution principles applied to

borrowing and lending.

"And if a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not *being* with it, he shall surely make *it* good. If its owner *was* with it, he shall not make *it* good; if it *was* hired, it came for its hire.

a. If a man borrows anything from his

neighbor: The principles of responsibility and restitution also applied to borrowing and lending.

b. He shall surely make it good: This was the simple principle meant to guide the judges.

The guilty party had to **make it good**.

B. Moral and ceremonial laws.

1. (16-17) The remedy for pre-marital sex.

"If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her *to be* his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.

a. If a man entices a virgin who is not

betrothed: Some claim this passage does not prohibit pre-marital sex; but it does in practice, because it requires a man to either marry or provide for a woman he has pre-marital sex with.

b. He shall surely pay the bride-price for

her to be his wife: This law emphasizes the principle that there is no such thing as "casual"

sex. Both Old and New Testaments state that sexual relations carry lasting consequences (1Co. 6:15-16).

i. "This was an exceedingly wise and humane law, and must have operated powerfully against seduction and fornication; because the person who might feel inclined to take the advantage of a young woman

knew that he must marry her, and give her a dowry." (Clarke).

ii. This law is only effective when virginity is prized among women; here, a woman's virginity is her guarantee that she cannot be treated "cheaply".

iii. Far too many people - especially women - sell themselves cheaply by easily giving away their virginity. A man illustrated this with a true story about a friend who owned an antique store and had a table for sale.

The table was worth \$600, but was marked down to \$300. A man tried to bargain her down to \$200, and not only did she refuse, but she realized the true value of the table, and upped the price to its true worth - even when offered \$300. The man finally bought the table for \$600, and certainly treated it like a \$600 table - because its worth had been fought for. Many women who know men treat them shabbily have contributed to the problem by selling themselves cheaply.

2. (18-20) Three capital crimes.

"You shall not permit a sorceress to live. Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.

He who sacrifices to *any* god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

a. **A sorceress:** The practice of sorcery was almost always associated with "medicinal arts" (the taking of drugs) in the ancient world, and was therefore a connection between drug taking and occultist practices.

b. **You shall not permit a sorceress to live:** This was considered a severe enough threat that sorcery was considered a capital crime. The link between drugs and the occult was rightly seen as deadly.

c. Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death: Bestiality was practiced in the ancient world, and God's Word specifically prohibits it. However, if someone will not allow God's Word to guide his or her sexual morality, there is no rational reason why this should be considered wrong.

i. If we reject God's Word when it comes to other areas of sexual morality, there is no other place to draw the line. We cannot say that sex with animals, children, or the dead is wrong if the ethic is "if it feels good, do it."

ii. Recently, in response to their university's sponsorship of GLAD (Gay/Lesbian Awareness Days), a university group answered with BAD (Bestiality Awareness Days) - but they were not allowed to have their own "celebration." There was no *rational* reason to reject this apart from a Biblical foundation for morality.

3. (21-27) Compassion for the poor and weak.

"You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.

If you afflict them in any way, *and* they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your

children fatherless. If you lend money to *any of* My people *who are* poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that *is* his only covering, it *is* his garment for his skin.

What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I *am* gracious.

a. You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him: A good measure of our

moral character is found in how we treat a **stranger**. People often find it easy to treat their own flesh and blood right, but God commands us to have a concern for others - including the **stranger**.

i. The hatred and strife between ethnic and national groups shows just how little humanity has progressed.

ii. It is fair to examine how accommodating are we to the strangers among us. If we stay with our own safe group and enjoy all the blessings, and fail to be outreaching and out-looking as a blessing to others, we **mistreat a stranger**.

b. **You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child**: The **widow** and **fatherless child** were the weakest and most vulnerable members of society. Therefore God commanded a special care and concern for them, and God promised to protect them.

c. **If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him**: Interest was prohibited on loans made to the poor and the taking of collateral had to be reasonable.

i. This did not prohibit the taking of interest on loans that were not for relief of the poor.

"It is evident that what is here said must be understood of accumulated usury, or what

we call *compound interest* only; and

accordingly *neshech* is mentioned with and distinguished from *tarbith* and *marbith*, *interest* or *simple interest*, Lev. 25:36,37; Pro. 28:8; Eze. 18:8, 13, 17, and 22:12." (Clarke)

d. **And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear**: God promises to hear the prayer of the poor man when he cries out to the Lord.

God's general sympathy for the poor is reflected in the fact that Jesus came from a poor family.

When He was dedicated in the temple, shortly after His birth, the sacrifice was that of a poor family: two birds (Luk. 2:24).

4. (28-31) Laws regarding holiness and separation unto God. "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. You shall not delay *to offer* the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. Likewise you shall do with your oxen *and* your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn *by beasts* in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

a. **You shall not revile God, nor curse a**

ruler of your people: The most basic arena for holiness is always the tongue. God cares how we talk about Him and those He has put us into submission to.

b. **You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices:** We also respect God by giving Him His due. If we are commanded to give something to God, it is a sin to not give it.

c. **And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the**

field: We are commanded to act differently than the animals. We are called to be **holy men**, not scavengers who tear at carcasses as animals do. This reinforces the basic idea of holiness: that we are set apart, different.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no blood guilt for him. **3** If the sun has risen on him, then there is blood guilt for him. A thief must surely make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he will be sold for his theft. **4** If the stolen item should in fact be found alive in his possession, whether it be an ox

or a donkey or a sheep, he must pay back double. **5** “If a man grazes his livestock in a field or a vineyard, and he lets the livestock loose and they graze in the field of another man, he must make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

6 “If a fire breaks out and spreads to thorn bushes, so that stacked grain or standing grain or the whole field is consumed, the one who started the fire must surely make restitution.

7 “If a man gives his neighbor money or articles for safekeeping, and it is stolen from the man’s house, if the thief is caught, he must repay double. **8** If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house will be brought before the judges to see whether he has laid his hand on his neighbor’s goods. **9** In all cases of illegal possessions, whether for an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any kind of lost item, about which someone says ‘This belongs to me,’ the matter of the two of them will come before the judges, and the one whom the judges declare guilty must repay double to his neighbor. **10** If a man gives his neighbor a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it dies or is hurt or is carried away without anyone seeing it, **11** then there will be an oath to the LORD between the two of them, that he has not laid his hand on his neighbor’s goods, and its owner will accept this, and he will not have to pay. **12** But if it was stolen from him, he will pay its owner. **13** If it is torn in pieces, then he will bring it for evidence, and he will not have to pay for what was torn.

14 “If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is hurt or dies when its owner was not with it, the man who borrowed it will surely pay. **15** If its owner was with it, he will not have to pay; if it was hired, what was paid for the hire covers it.

16 “If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and has sexual relations with her, he must surely endow her to be his

wife. **17** If her father refuses to give her to him, he must pay money for the bride price of virgins.

18 “You must not allow a sorceress to live.

19 “Whoever has sexual relations with a beast must surely be put to death.

20 “Whoever sacrifices to a god other than the LORD alone must be utterly destroyed.

21 “You must not wrong a foreigner nor oppress him, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

22 “You must not afflict any widow or orphan. **23** If you afflict them in any way and they cry to me, I will surely hear their cry, **24** and my anger will burn and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives will be widows and your children will be fatherless.

25 “If you lend money to any of my people who are needy among you, do not be like a moneylender to him; do not charge him interest. **26** If you do take the garment of your neighbor in pledge, you must return it to him by the time the sun goes down, **27** for it is his only covering – it is his garment for his body. What else can he sleep in?

And when he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

28 “You must not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.

29 “Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats. You must give me the firstborn of your sons. **30**

You must also do this for your oxen and for your sheep; seven days they may remain with their mothers, but give them to me on the eighth day.

31 “You will be holy people to me; you must not eat any meat torn by animals in the field. You must throw it to the dogs.

1 “You must not give a false report. Do not make common cause with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

Guzik - Exodus 23:1-33

Exodus 23 - More Laws Directed to Judges

A. Laws promoting justice.

1. (1-3) Commands to respect the law, not convenience or the crowd.

"You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert *justice*. You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

a. **You shall not circulate a false report:** This command comes in this context because it is a fundamental way to **put your hand with the wicked and follow a crowd to do evil.**

i. The only way to obey this command is to put a *stop* to a false report. Doing nothing or remaining "neutral" is to allow the false report to circulate.

ii. Since the issue is a **false report**, it is proper to ask - and demand - *proof* from the person bringing the report, and proof as required in the Bible - from two or three witnesses.

iii. "The *inventor* and *receiver* of false and slanderous reports, are almost equally criminal. The word seems to refer to *either*, and our translators have very properly retained both senses." (Clarke)

b. **You shall not follow a crowd to do evil:** It has always been in the nature of man to **follow a crowd to do evil**, since the time Adam followed Eve into sin. This is why it is so important for us to choose our *crowd* carefully: *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."* (1Co. 15:33).

c. **You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute:** No partiality was to be shown **to a poor man**; the poor are not to be favored just because they are poor, any more than the rich should be favored because they are rich.

2. (4-9) Laws promoting kindness and righteous civil conduct.

"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous.

For I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

a. If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again:

These laws promoting kindness and fair conduct in the community of Israel were easily summarized by Jesus: *You shall love . . . your neighbor as yourself* (Luk. 10:27).

b. Your enemy's ox . . . one who hates

you . . . you shall not oppress a stranger: God commanded Israel to show kindness and fairness towards those who they might not be

kind towards by nature. In later times, some rabbis taught there was an obligation - or at least a permission - to hate one's enemy. Here, kindness is commanded even to **one who hates you** - even as Jesus made clear in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luk. 10:30-37).

B. Laws of ceremonial devotion.

1. (10-13) The Sabbath principle.

"Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh *year* you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with

your vineyard *and* your olive grove. Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed. And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.

a. **Six years you shall sow your land:** The principle of the Sabbath applied to more than the workweek. There were also Sabbath years,

where the land was to **rest and lie fallow** one year out of seven.

b. **The seventh year you shall let it rest**

and lie fallow: By tradition, some in Israel accomplished this by only cultivating six-sevenths of their land at any one time, and practicing a method of crop rotation.

i. Failure of Israel to give the land its Sabbaths determined the certainty and duration of the Babylonian exile (Lev. 26:32-35, 2Ch. 36:21).

c. **On the seventh day you shall rest, that**

your ox and your donkey may rest: The principle of Sabbath rest was intended for all people, and even for animals. In the same pattern, the Sabbath rest fulfilled in Jesus is intended for all people (2Pe. 3:9), and even for all creation (Rom. 8:21).

d. **Make no mention of the name of other**

gods: The Sabbath was to be dedicated to the LORD God, and not to any foreign or false god.

2. (14-17) Three national feasts.

"Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened

Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven

days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field;

and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of* your labors from the field. Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

a. **Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year:** God commanded that three times a year, all men in Israel had to come together to keep the most important feasts. These included Passover/Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Ingathering (Pentecost).

b. **Feast of Unleavened Bread . . . Feast of Harvest . . . Feast of Ingathering:** Details regarding the observance of these feasts will be given later in the Book of Leviticus.

3. (18-19) Laws regarding sacrifice and firstfruits offering.

"You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

a. **You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread:** Since leaven was a symbol of sin and corruption, atoning blood could never be offered with leavened bread.

b. **Nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning:** If atonement was to be regarded as a complete work, it must be wholly offered unto the LORD - *everything* must be given to God, not a portion reserved for later.

This especially included **the fat of My sacrifice**, the best portion of the sacrificed animal.

c. **You shall not boil a young kid in its mother's milk:** This strange-sounding command was actually a command to not imitate a common pagan fertility ritual.

i. But because of strange rabbinical interpretations, today this command is the reason why an observant Jew cannot eat a

kosher cheeseburger. Observant Jews today will not eat milk and meat at the same meal (or even on the same plates with the same utensils cooked in the same pots), because the rabbis insisted that the meat in the hamburger may have come from the calf of the cow that gave the milk for the cheese, and the cheese and the meat would "boil" together in one's stomach, and be a violation of this command.

ii. This law also speaks of keeping distance between a mother and the death of her offspring. Meyer says this law was meant "to inculcate a tender appreciation of the natural order, and of the relation subsisting between the mother and her offspring. It was against

nature to make the mother an accomplice in the death of her child."

C. The promise of God's presence and blessing.

1. (20-21) The Angel who has the name of God **in Him**.

"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name *is* in Him.

a. **I send an Angel before you**: This unique angel commanded obedience from Israel and had the right of judgment over them. Most of all, the name of God was in this angel (**for My name is in Him**).

i. We only know a few angels by name, and in a sense, *Micha-el* and *Gabri-el* each have the name of God in their name. But neither Michael nor Gabriel commanded this kind of obedience from Israel or presumed to sit in judgment over them. This is the specific

Angel of the LORD, Jesus appearing in the Old Testament, before His incarnation in Bethlehem, who often speaks directly as the LORD.

ii. **My name is in Him**: Of course, the name Yahweh is **in** Jesus. His name is literally *Yah-shua*. Jesus was with Israel in all their wilderness experience.

b. **And to bring you into the place which I have prepared**: The **Angel** would go before them **into the place which I have prepared**.

The same principle is true of our life with Jesus today. Not only is it true that Jesus goes before us to prepare a place for us in heaven (Joh.

14:2-3), but the place we walk in today was prepared by God, and where we will walk tomorrow is prepared by Him also.

2. (22-26) Blessing promised to an obedient Israel.

"But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their *sacred* pillars. So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you.

No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

a. **But if you indeed obey His voice and do**

all that I speak: It was characteristic of the Mosaic covenant that blessing was based almost purely on Israel's performance. If they obeyed, they would be blessed. If they disobeyed, they would be cursed.

i. Under the New Covenant we operate on a different principle. Though there are inevitable consequences of sin and God's loving correction for disobedience, we are blessed in Jesus, and not because we have been obedient (Eph. 1:3).

b. **My Angel will go before you:** God did not bring Israel out of Egypt to leave them in the wilderness. His plan was to bring them into His land of promise and abundance. Though there were mighty nations in Canaan, His **Angel** would bring an obedient Israel into the Promised Land.

3. (27-30) How God will help Israel take possession of the land.

"I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.

a. **I will send My fear before you . . . and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you:** God promised that He would go before Israel and with the land for them, but He would not drive out the enemies in Canaan all at once. Israel may have wanted to have the land all cleared out before them, but God knew it was not best for the land or for them.

b. **The land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous:** This was just one reason why it was better for God to defeat their enemies **little by little**. Doing it the "easy way" - clearing out all of

Israel's enemies out at once - had consequences Israel could not see or appreciate.

c. **Little by little:** Though it sometimes frustrates us, this is often the way God works in our life. He clears things out little by little, though we might prefer it all at once. But God wanted Israel to **have increased** in the process of taking the Promised Land. He wanted them to grow.

i. Doing it all at once might seem easier and better to us, but will have consequences we cannot see or appreciate. God cares that we grow, and so grows us **little by little**.

4. (31-33) Boundaries of Israel's inheritance.

"And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me.

For *if* you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

a. **From the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the**

River: This encompasses a huge portion of land, one that Israel has never fully possessed.

i. God may grant, but we must possess. He withholds our possession of many blessings until we will partner with Him in bold faith and obedience.

ii. We have been granted **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in**

Christ; but will only possess what we will partner with Him in faith and obedience to receive.

iii. God is not an indulgent, spoiling father, pouring out on His children resources, blessings, and gifts they are not ready to receive or be responsible with.

b. You shall make no covenant with them: Through lack of discernment, Israel did end up making a covenant with some of the people of the land (Joshua 9). There is no area of the law that Israel - or anyone - has ever kept perfectly.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** “You must not follow a crowd in doing evil things; in a lawsuit you must not offer testimony that agrees with a crowd so as to pervert justice, **3** and you must not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

4 “If you encounter your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, you must by all means return it to him. **5** If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, you must not ignore him, but be sure to help him with it.

6 “You must not turn away justice for your poor people in their lawsuits. **7** Keep your distance from a false charge – do not kill the innocent and the righteous, for I will not justify the wicked.

8 “You must not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and subverts the words of the righteous.

9 “You must not oppress a foreigner, since you know the life of a foreigner, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

10 “For six years you are to sow your land and gather in its produce. **11** But in the seventh year you must let it lie fallow and leave it alone so that the poor of your people may eat, and what they leave any animal in the field may eat; you must do likewise with your vineyard and your olive grove.

12 For six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you must cease, in order that your ox and your donkey may rest and that your female servant’s son and any hired help may refresh themselves.

13 “Pay attention to do everything I have told you, and do not even mention the names of other gods – do not let them be heard on your lips.

14 “Three times in the year you must make a pilgrim feast to me. **15** You are to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, as I

commanded you, at the appointed time of the month of Abib, for at that time you came out of Egypt. No one may appear before me empty-handed.

16 “You are also to observe the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors that you have sown in the field, and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year when you have gathered in your harvest out of the field. **17** At three times in the year all your males will appear before the Lord GOD.

18 “You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with bread containing yeast; the fat of my festal sacrifice must not remain until morning. **19** The first of the firstfruits of your soil you must bring to the house of the LORD your God.

“You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

20 “I am going to send an angel before you to protect you as you journey and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. **21** Take heed because of him, and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. **22** But if you diligently obey him and do all that I command, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will be an adversary to your adversaries. **23** For my angel will go before you and bring you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will destroy them completely.

24 “You must not bow down to their gods; you must not serve them or do according to their practices. Instead you must completely overthrow them and smash their standing stones to pieces. **25** You must serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove sickness from your midst. **26** No woman will miscarry her young or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days.

27 “I will send my terror before you, and I will destroy all the people whom you encounter; I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. **28** I will send hornets before you

that will drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite before you. **29** I will not drive them out before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild animals multiply against you. **30** Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you become fruitful and inherit the land. **31** I will set your boundaries from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River, for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.

32 "You must make no covenant with them or with their gods. **33** They must not live in your land, lest they make you sin against me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

1 But to Moses the LORD said, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from a distance.

Guzik - Exodus 24:1-18

Exodus 24 - The Covenant Is Made

A. The "signing" of the Mosaic covenant.

1. (1-3) Moses relates **all the words of the LORD and all the judgments** to Israel.

Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him." So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments.

And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do."

a. **Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:** We are reminded that God spoke Exodus chapters 20:22 through 23:33 to Moses alone. Now others were to come up on the mountain with Moses, yet **Moses alone**

shall come near. Moses was allowed special access to God, so God would speak to Moses and Moses could speak to the nation.

b. So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the

judgments: When the people heard the law of God they responded with complete agreement (**all the people answered with one voice**).

Then they verbally agreed to obey the LORD (**All the words which the LORD has said we will do**).

i. Israel here is perhaps guilty of tremendous over-confidence. The way they seemed to easily say to God, "we will keep Your law" seems to lack appreciation for how complete and searching God's law is.

ii. However, a nation that had been terrified by God's awesome presence at Sinai was in no state of mind to do anything *but* agree with God.

2. (4-8) The nation confirms their solemn covenant with God. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who

offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

a. And Moses wrote all the words of the

LORD: In the previous verse (Exo. 24:3), Israel verbally agreed to a covenant-relationship with God; but there is a sense in which this is simply not good enough. They must do specific things to confirm their covenant with God. First, the word of God must be written: **Moses wrote all the words of the LORD.** God's word was important enough that it was not be left up to human recollection and the creative nature of memory. It had to be written down.

i. With the same idea God spoke through

Habakkuk: *Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.*

(Hab. 2:2)

b. **Who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the**

LORD: Second, covenant is only made in the context of sacrifice. Sacrifice admits our own sin and failing before God, and addressing that need through the death of a substitute.

c. **He took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people:**

Third, covenant is made when God's word is heard and responded to. Our covenant with God is based on His words, His terms, not our own words and terms.

i. Additionally, there must be a response to

God's word: **All that the LORD has said**

we will do, and be obedient. Just as much as God would not negotiate His covenant with Israel, neither would He force it upon them. They must freely respond.

d. **Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on**

the people: Fourth, covenant is made with the application of blood. As the nation "received" the blood of the covenant, the covenant was sealed.

i. There was nothing "magical" about blood, but because it represents the *life* of a being (*For the life of the flesh is in the blood*, Lev.

17:11), blood represents the outpouring of life, of one life being given for another.

ii. Almost a thousand years later, God did not forget the blood of this covenant:

Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. (Zec. 9:11)

iii. The blood of Jesus' covenant saves us:

this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

(Mat. 26:28)

iv. The blood of Jesus' covenant is also the foundation for all our growth and maturity in

Christ: *Now may the God of peace who*

brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead,

that great Shepherd of the sheep, through

the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete

in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well

pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory

forever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13:20-21)

B. The elders and priests of Israel with God on Sinai.

1. (9-11) The elders of Israel meet with God.

Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and

Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the

God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a

paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very

heavens in *its* clarity. But on the nobles of the children of

Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they

ate and drank.

a. **And they saw the God of Israel:** It is difficult to say exactly what they saw. Most likely they saw a heavenly vision of God, after the pattern of Isaiah (Isaiah 6) or Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1).

i. The blue of the **sapphire** may suggest that the elders saw the sea of glass before the throne of God (Rev. 4:6).

b. **But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand:** This indicates that as glorious as this experience was, there was something missing or incomplete in the encounter. This was not a "face-to-face" encounter with God. These elders of Israel could see God, but there was no fellowship or communication between them and God.

c. **So they saw God:** God allowed the elders of Israel to see such a spectacular vision to impress on them the reality of God's presence.

After this experience they would be more likely to trust God when He spoke through Moses.

d. **And they ate and drank:** God wanted them to eat and drink in His presence because He wanted to communicate a sense of fellowship with these leaders of Israel.

2. (12-18) Moses goes up on the mountain to meet with God and to receive the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed Aaron and Hur *are* with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the

midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

a. Come up to Me on the mountain and be

there: Moses went up at God's invitation and he also brought with him **his assistant Joshua**. This same Joshua became the great leader God used to bring Israel into the Promised Land, but he began as Moses'

assistant - first, helping Moses in battle (Exo. 17:8-16), then by assisting him here in spiritual things.

b. Indeed Aaron and Hur are with you:

Moses had good reason to believe that these two men could supervise the camp of Israel.

They already proved themselves as men capable of assisting Moses in prayer (Exo.

17:10-13). Yet **Aaron and Hur** didn't do a good job guarding the camp.

c. The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of

Israel: Perhaps this looked like glowing, radiant embers of a hot fire (**a consuming fire**). The glorious presence of God on Sinai lingered the forty days Moses was on the mount. Though the people could not see God, and could not see Moses, God left them reminders of His glory and presence, to help them trust what they could not see.

i. God gives us similar reminders of His glory and His presence. He gives us reason to trust Him whom we cannot see because of these reminders.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Moses alone may come near the LORD,

but the others must not come near, nor may the people go up with him."

3 Moses came and told the people all the LORD's words and all the decisions. All the people answered together, "We are willing to do all the words that the LORD has said," **4** and Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.

Early in the morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and arranged twelve standing stones - according to the twelve tribes of Israel. **5** He sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls for peace offerings to the LORD. **6**

Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and half of the blood he splashed on the altar. **7** He took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people, and they said, "We are willing to do and obey all that the LORD has spoken." **8** So Moses took the blood and splashed it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up, **10** and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear like the sky itself. **11** But he did not lay a hand on the leaders of the Israelites, so they saw God, and they ate and they drank.

12

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me to the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandments that I have written, so that you may teach them." **13** So Moses set out with Joshua his attendant, and Moses went up the mountain of God. **14** He told the elders, "Wait for us in this place until we return to you. Here are Aaron and Hur with you.

Whoever has any matters of dispute can approach them."

15 Moses went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. **16** The glory of the LORD resided on Mount Sinai,

and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from within the cloud. **17** Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in plain view of the people.

18 Moses went into the cloud when he went up the mountain, and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

Guzik - Exodus 25:1-40

Exodus 25 - Supplies and Directions for the Tabernacle

A. The supplies for this building project.

1. (1-2) God tells Moses to ask for an offering.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering."

a. **Speak to the children of Israel, that**

they bring Me an offering: Before God told Moses what the offering was for, He told Moses to take an offering. God wanted Israel to be motivated by a willing heart more than by a specific need.

i. Our giving should not be *primarily* because of need. We should primarily give because our willing heart compels us.

b. **Bring Me an offering:** God is a rich God and can use any method of providing He wants.

Yet He usually uses the willing hearts of His people as the way to support His work.

i. This is because God wants to develop giving hearts within us. When we become givers we become more like God, who is the greatest giver: *For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son* (Joh. 3:16).

ii. Therefore we must be givers, not so much because God or the church needs our

money, but because we must be conformed into the image of God's Son (Romans

c. From everyone who gives it willingly

with his heart: God only wanted contributions from those who gave **willingly**. God is not interested in coerced or manipulated giving. In the New Testament this idea is echoed in 2Co.

9:7: So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

d. You shall take My offering: The offering didn't belong to Moses, it didn't belong to the elders, and it didn't belong to Israel itself. God said **you shall take My offering**. The offering belonged to God, and was held by Moses and the nation on God's behalf.

2. (3-7) The specific materials to be gathered.

"And this *is* the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

a. This is the offering which you shall take from them:

Each of these materials were used in building a structure God commanded Moses to build. Each of these materials has a symbolic or a spiritual representation relevant to the building.

i. In the proportion of the finished tabernacle, the present day value of these materials total more than \$13 million. Their combined weight would be almost 19,000 pounds (8,600 kilos).

b. **Blue:** The dye for this color was extracted from a shellfish, seemingly in several different hues.

c. **Purple:** The dye for this color came from the murex snail. It was a purple-red color.

d. **Scarlet:** The dye for this color came from the dried and powdered eggs and bodies of a particular worm (*coccus ilicis*) which attaches itself to the holly plant.

e. **Fine linen:** This term translates an Egyptian word. The Egyptians knew (and undoubtedly taught the Jews) how to make fine linen. In fine modern linens, there are 86 threads per inch. In Egyptian tombs they have found linen with 152 threads per inch.

f. **Goat hair:** Coverings made from this material were typically black and coarse, similar to our modern felt.

g. **Rams' skins:** This customarily had the wool removed and was like fine leather.

h. **Badger skins:** This difficult to translate phrase may also refer to the skins of porpoises or manatees (the sea cow)..

i. **Acacia wood:** This wood is harder and darker than oak. It is also very durable because wood-eating insects avoid it.

3. (8-9) The purpose and pattern of the tabernacle.

"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, *that is*, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make *it*."

a. **Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I**

may dwell among them: The purpose of the tabernacle was to be the dwelling place of God.

The idea was not that God exclusively lived in that place, but that it was the specific place where men would come and meet God.

b. **According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings:**

The pattern of the tabernacle was according to a heavenly reality. It was a *copy and shadow of the heavenly things* (Heb. 8:5). Therefore, it had to be made according to exact dimensions, being somewhat of a "scale model" of the area around God's throne in heaven.

i. " *The pattern* means almost 'architect's model.'" (Cole)

B. Instructions for building the Ark of the Covenant.

1. (10-11) The basic structure of the Ark of the Covenant.

"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.

And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around.

a. **They shall make an ark:** The first item God told Moses to build was the **ark**, later called the *Ark of the Covenant*. This was the most important single item associated with the tabernacle, modeled after the throne of God in heaven.

b. **They shall make an ark of acacia wood:** The Ark of the Covenant was essentially a box (an **ark** is a box, not a boat). It was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, 3 foot 9 inches long; 2 foot 3 inches wide; and 2 foot 3 inches high.

2. (12-15) The rings and the poles for the Ark of the Covenant.

"You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in its four corners; two rings *shall be* on one side, and two rings on the other side. And you shall make poles *of* acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.

a. **You shall cast four rings of gold for it:** The Ark didn't have "handles" and was not to be carried by lifting it directly in one's hands.

Instead, it was to be carried by inserting gold-overlaid wood poles into gold rings at each corner of the Ark.

b. **The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it:** The poles were to remain inserted in the rings, and to be the only proper source of contact with the Ark. Apart from touching the poles, it was forbidden to touch the Ark of the Covenant.

i. In 2Sa. 6:6-7, Uzzah touched the Ark to

keep it from falling off a cart but he did not touch it at the poles and God struck him dead. Uzzah was wrong in his thinking that God would let the Ark be damaged; in fact, it *did not* fall off the cart, and no thanks to Uzzah. Uzzah was also wrong in his thinking that there was something less pure about the ground than his act of pure disobedience.

3. (16) The contents of the Ark.

"And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

a. **You shall put into the ark the**

Testimony: God instructed Moses to put **the Testimony** - that is, a copy of the law - into the Ark of the Covenant.

b. **Which I will give you:** God told Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant to hold the law even before the law was given.

Later, God

would instruct Israel to put other things in the Ark as well - *the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the*

tablets of the covenant (Heb. 9:4).

3. (17-22) The mercy seat.

"You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width.

And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall

make them at the two ends of the mercy seat.

Make one cherub at one end, and the other

cherub at the other end; you shall make the

cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above,

covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the

mercy seat. You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give

you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from

above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

a. You shall make a mercy seat of pure

gold: The **mercy seat** - actually, the lid to the Ark - was to be made of pure gold, and made with the sculpted figures of cherubim. In the

picture provided by the Ark of the Covenant, it was as if God dwelt **between the two**

cherubim, and met Israel there.

b. And there I will meet with you: God met with Israel in the sense that He met with the representative of Israel (the high priest) in

peace because of the atoning blood on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14-15).

c. I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two

cherubim: It was as if God, looking down from His dwelling place between the cherubim, saw the law in the Ark - and knew we were guilty of breaking His law. But atoning blood of sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat, so that God saw the blood covering the breaking of His law - and forgiveness could be offered.

i. It is remarkable that *even before God gave Moses the tablets of the Ten Commandments*, God made provision for Israel's failure under the law.

ii. In Rom. 3:25, the Greek word for *propitiation* (*hilasterion*) is also used in the Septuagint (an early translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, read in

the days of the New Testament) for the

"mercy seat," it might be said "Jesus is our mercy seat" - He is the place and the means of our redemption.

C. Instructions for building the table of showbread.

1. (23-29) Dimensions and materials for the table of showbread.

"You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *are* at its four legs.

The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold.

a. **You shall also make a table of acacia**

wood: This table was to be made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold; 3 feet long, 1 foot, 6 inches wide, and 2 feet, 3 inches high.

b. **The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table:** This table was also to have rings and poles necessary to carry it, as well as accompanying dishes, pans, and so forth, all made out of pure gold.

2. (30) The purpose for the table of showbread.

"And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

a. **And you shall set the showbread on the**

table before Me always: On the table of showbread were set twelve loaves of

showbread - literally, "bread of faces." This was bread associated with, and to be eaten before, the face of God.

i. Meyer calls the **showbread** "presence-bread." Bread is necessary for survival, and the link was a reminder that

fellowship with God was just as necessary for man.

b. **Showbread:** According to Lev. 24:5-9, **showbread** was made of fine flour, and twelve cakes of showbread - one for each tribe of Israel - set on the table, sprinkled lightly with frankincense. Once a week, the bread was replaced and only priests could eat the old bread.

D. Instructions for building the lampstand.

1. (31-36) The lampstand itself.

"You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be *of one piece*. And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. Three bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and a flower; and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. On the lampstand itself four bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms*, *each with* its *ornamental* knob and flower. And *there shall be* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. Their knobs and their branches *shall be of one piece*; all of it *shall be* one hammered piece of pure gold.

a. **You shall also make a lampstand of pure**

gold: The lampstand was hammered out of pure gold, with no specific dimensions given, but after the pattern of a modern-day menorah.

It had one middle shaft with three branches coming out of each side, for a total of seven places for lamps.

b. **Three bowls shall be made like almond**

blossoms on one branch: The repetition of the **almond blossom** motif was important because it was the first tree to blossom in the springtime.

2. (37-40) The lamps for the lampstand.

"You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it. And its wick-trimmers and their trays *shall be* of pure gold. It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. And see to it that you make *them* according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

a. **You shall make seven lamps for it:** The tabernacle represented the throne of God, and Rev. 4:5 describes *Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God*. The **seven lamps** represent the presence of the Holy Spirit in heaven.

b. **So that they give light in front of it:** Since the tabernacle itself was a completely covered tent, the only source of light was the lamps of the lampstand.

c. **According to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain:** The principle first mentioned in Exo. 25:9 - that the tabernacle and its furnishings were to be built according to the specific, revealed pattern - is here again emphasized. It had to be a proper representation of the heavenly reality.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "Tell the Israelites to take an offering for me; from every person motivated by a willing heart you are to receive my offering. **3** This is the offering you are to accept from them: gold, silver, bronze, **4** blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goat's hair, **5** ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, **6** oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense, **7** onyx stones, and other gems to be set in the ephod and in the breastpiece.

8 Let them make for me a sanctuary, so that I may live among them. **9** According to all that I am showing you - the

pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings – you must make it exactly so.

10 “They are to make an ark of acacia wood – its length is to be three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches. **11** You are to overlay it with pure gold – both inside and outside you must overlay it, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold over it. **12** You are to cast four gold rings for it and put them on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. **13** You are to make poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold, **14** and put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark with them. **15** The poles must remain in the rings of the ark; they must not be removed from it. **16** You are to put into the ark the testimony that I will give to you.

17 “You are to make an atonement lid of pure gold; its length is to be three feet nine inches, and its width is to be two feet three inches. **18** You are to make two cherubim of gold; you are to make them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid. **19** Make one cherub on one end and one cherub on the other end; from the atonement lid you are to make the cherubim on the two ends. **20** The cherubim are to be spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid with their wings, and the cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the atonement lid. **21** You are to put the atonement lid on top of the ark, and in the ark you are to put the testimony I am giving you. **22** I will meet with you there, and from above the atonement lid, from between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will command you for the Israelites.

23 “You are to make a table of acacia wood; its length is to be three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches. **24** You are to overlay it with pure gold, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold for it. **25** You are to make a surrounding frame for it about three

inches broad, and you are to make a surrounding border of gold for its frame. **26** You are to make four rings of gold for it and attach the rings at the four corners where its four legs are. **27** The rings are to be close to the frame to provide places for the poles to carry the table. **28** You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that the table may be carried with them. **29** You are to make its plates, its ladles, its pitchers, and its bowls, to be used in pouring out offerings; you are to make them of pure gold. **30** You are to set the Bread of the Presence on the table before me continually.

31 “You are to make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand is to be made of hammered metal; its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its blossoms are to be from the same piece. **32** Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand, three branches of the lampstand from one side of it and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it. **33** Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, and three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on the next branch, and the same for the six branches extending from the lampstand.

34 On the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms, **35** with a bud under the first two branches from it, and a bud under the next two branches from it, and a bud under the third two branches from it, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. **36** Their buds and their branches will be one piece, all of it one hammered piece of pure gold.

37 “You are to make its seven lamps, and then set its lamps up on it, so that it will give light to the area in front of it. **38** Its trimmers and its trays are to be of pure gold.

39 About seventy-five pounds of pure gold is to be used for it and for all these utensils. **40** Now be sure to make them according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain.

1 “The tabernacle itself you are to make with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet; you are to make them with cherubim that are the work of an artistic designer.

Guzik - Exodus 26:1-37

Exodus 26 - Coverings and Curtains for the Tabernacle

A. Four sets of curtains for the tent itself.

1. (1-6) The fine linen curtain.

"Moreover you shall make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. The length of each curtain *shall be* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements. Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and *the other* five curtains *shall be* coupled to one another. And you shall make loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of *one* set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that *is* on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.

a. Make the tabernacle with ten curtains

of fine woven linen: The tabernacle was a tent with a frame and a series of elaborate coverings. This section describes the first

covering, the one seen from the interior of the tabernacle.

i. The plans for the tabernacle were revealed to Moses from the inside out, starting with the interior furniture and then working out.

We approach the sanctuary from the outside in, but God builds the sanctuary from the inside out. He works in His people according

to the same pattern.

b. Fine woven linen . . . with artistic

designs of cherubim: The designs on this covering were visible only from the inside of the tabernacle. Therefore, on the inside of the tabernacle, one saw cherubim all around - as

one would see in heaven (Psa. 80:1, Isa. 37:16, and Eze. 10:3).

c. Five curtains shall be coupled: The fine linen curtain was made by sewing together **five curtains**, each one 42 feet (14 meters) long and 6 feet (2 meters) wide. They were first joined in sets of five, and then joined together for a covering 42 feet (14 meters) by 60 feet (20 meters).

d. Make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps: The sets of five curtains were not to be sewn to each other, but joined by a system of loops on the fabric and gold clasps to link the loops from one set of five curtains to the other set of five curtains.

e. So that it may be one tabernacle: The spiritual principle illustrated with this method of joining the curtains is unity in diversity. It is the same idea of Rom. 12:5: *we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

2. (7-13) The curtain made of goats' hair.

"You shall also make curtains of goats' *hair*, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. The length of each curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in *one* set, and fifty loops on the edge of the

curtain of the second set. And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it.

a. **Make curtains of goats' hair:** The second covering was made of goats' hair, producing a fabric dark, thick, and coarse - somewhat like felt. This covering was made by joining together five and six strips of fabric with each strip being 45 feet (15 meters) long and 6 feet (2 meters) wide.

b. **Couple the tent together, that it may be one:** The set of five strips and the set of six strips were joined together with a series of loops and bronze clasps. The inner covering or curtain used gold clasps, but this second covering used bronze.

c. **The remnant that remains . . . shall hang over the back of the tabernacle:** Since the goats' hair layer was six feet (2 meters) longer than the fine linen layer, the extra six feet covered over the back portion of the tent.

d. **A cubit on one side, and a cubit on the other side:** Since the goats' hair covering was wider by 3 feet (2 meters), this layer completely covered over the fine linen layer.

i. Therefore, the fine linen layer - the "heavenly" set of coverings - was completely obscured and overlapped by the dark covering of goats' hair. It was not open to observation, even in part. Heaven remained hidden to all except those who enter in through the door of the tabernacle.

3. (14) Two sets of coverings: ram skin dyed red, and badger skin.

"You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that.

a. You shall also make a covering of ram

skins: The covering of **ram skins** was like fine leather dyed red. No specific size or arrangement is mentioned for the assembling of this covering.

b. A covering of badger skins above that: The outer covering of **badger skins** (or, perhaps porpoise or sea-cow skins) was a durable and water resistant outer covering. It wasn't particularly beautiful to look at, but it was extremely comfortable.

i. When these four layers of curtains were laid on one another, the result was very dry and very dark tent. The only light came from the lampstand described in the previous chapter.

B. The framing system for the tabernacle.

1. (15-25) Boards for the sides of the tent.

"And for the tabernacle you shall make the boards of acacia wood, standing upright. Ten

cubits *shall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and a half *shall be* the width of each board. Two tenons *shall be* in each board for binding one to another. Thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, *there shall be* twenty boards and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six boards. And you shall also make two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. They shall be coupled together at the bottom and they shall be coupled together at the top by one ring.

Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be for the two corners. So there shall be eight

boards with their sockets of silver; sixteen sockets; two sockets under each board.

a. For the tabernacle you shall make the

boards of acacia wood: Each board was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. Each board was 15 feet (5 meters) high and 2 feet 3 inches (about .75 meter) wide.

b. Twenty boards for the south side: The north and south sides of the tabernacle had 20 boards each. The back (**westward**) side was six boards wide with two corner boards, for a total of eight boards across the back.

c. Coupled together at the top by one ring: Each board was joined together by a system of **tenons** (tabs) with **rings**, through which ran bars. Each board had four rings through which the bars ran, and the corner boards had eight rings, four on two sides to accommodate the corners.

d. So there shall be eight boards with their sockets of silver; sixteen sockets: Each board rested on two sockets of silver, each socket made with one talent of silver. Therefore each board rested on a base of 264 pounds (120 kilos) of silver.

i. Silver is the metal associated with redemption and payment for sin (Exo. 21:32, Lev. 5:15, 27:3, 27:6, Num. 18:16, and Deu. 22:19). Jesus was betrayed for silver (Mat. 26:15). The tabernacle's foundation was silver - pointing to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

ii. Perhaps the dual nature of the foundation had to do with the two sources of revelation - the Old and New Testaments.

iii. The silver of redemption also separated the tabernacle from the dirt of the desert floor. Jesus' redeeming work separates us

from the world.

2. (26-30) Bars to join together the boards.

"And you shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far side westward.

The middle bar shall pass through the midst of the boards from end to end. You shall overlay the boards with gold, make their rings of gold as holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.

a. And you shall make bars of acacia

wood: Each bar was made of acacia wood and overlaid in gold. Seemingly, the bars ran the entire length of each side, linking together each board into one system.

b. The middle bar shall pass through the

midst of the boards from end to end: Four bars ran horizontally on each side, linking each board. One bar - **the middle bar** - was invisible, running in the middle of each board.

i. This speaks to both the visible and the invisible unity among God's people. The system of linking bars was both visible and invisible.

c. According to its pattern which you were

shown on the mountain: The repetition of this phrase (Exo. 25:9, 25:40 and here in 26:30) suggests that Moses received a vision of exactly how the tabernacle should look. He had to communicate this vision to the craftsmen who did the actual building.

i. God works the same way in leaders today.

He gives them a vision of what His work should be, and the leader passes it on to others who will do much of the actual work. Moses couldn't have remained silent about

what God had shown him, or the work would never have gotten done.

C. Two barriers: the veil and the screen.

1. (31-33) The veil.

"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia *wood* overlaid with gold. Their hooks *shall be* gold, upon four sockets of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil.

The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy *place* and the Most Holy.

a. **You shall make a veil:** The veil, made of **fine linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarn, with artistic design of cherubim**, hung on four pillars made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, set on silver sockets.

i. The ancient Jews said the later veil of the temple was as wide as four fingers, so that no one could possibly see into the Most Holy place.

b. **With an artistic design of cherubim:** From this, we know that the interior of the tabernacle was filled with gold and the pattern of cherubim.

c. **The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy:** The veil separated the tent into two compartments. The first compartment was **the holy place**, which was the larger room, first entered, with the table of showbread, the lampstand, and the altar of incense. The second compartment was **the Most Holy** place, a smaller room with the Ark of the Covenant.

i. This veil was a barrier, and no priest could go beyond the veil into the Most Holy place except the high priest. He could only enter once a year, and that on the Day of

Atonement.

ii. Spiritually speaking, in dying for our sins Jesus *with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption* (Heb. 9:12).

iii. In the temple, this veil was torn from top to bottom at the death of Jesus (Mat.

27:51), showing that through His death, there is no longer a barrier to the Most Holy place.

iv. Now the Most Holy Place is open to us:

brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is His flesh (Heb.

10:19-20). The torn veil of Mat. 27:51 also symbolizes the broken body of Jesus, through which we have access to the Most Holy Place.

v. Centuries later, the ancient general Pompey pushed aside the priests and walked right into the Most Holy place of the temple - and was astounded to see there was no idol or statue.

2. (34-35) The arrangement of furniture in the two rooms of the tabernacle.

"You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy. You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.

a. **Put the mercy seat upon the ark of the**

Testimony in the Most Holy: The Ark of the Covenant (here called **the ark of the Testimony**) was behind the veil in the **Most Holy** place.

b. **Set the table outside the veil:** The **table** of showbread was on the **north side** of the tabernacle (on the right as one entered the tabernacle) and the **lampstand** was **toward the south** (on the left as one entered the tabernacle).

i. The furniture in the holy place spoke of three great obligations of walking with God: pray (the altar of incense), fellowship (the table of showbread), and receive illumination (the lampstand).

3. (36-37) The screen for a door.

"You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver.

And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia *wood*, and overlay them with gold; their hooks *shall be of* gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.

a. **Make a screen for the door of the tabernacle:** The same color scheme - **blue and purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen thread** was used to make a covering for the east entrance of the tabernacle. This was the only way to enter the structure.

b. **Five pillars of acacia wood:** The screen hung from hooks on five pillars. Each pillar was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold and set on a foundation of bronze.

i. Since bronze (or brass) must be made with a refining fire, it pictures purity and endurance through trial. The entrance to the tabernacle hung on a symbolic foundation of what Jesus did for us

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The length of each curtain is to be forty-two feet, and the width of each curtain is to be six feet – the same size for each of the curtains. **3** Five curtains are to be joined, one to another, and the other five curtains are to be joined, one to another. **4** You are to make loops of blue

material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and in the same way you are to make loops in the outer edge of the end curtain in the second set. **5** You are to make fifty loops on the one curtain, and you are to make fifty loops on the end curtain which is on the second set, so that the loops are opposite one to another. **6** You are to make fifty gold clasps and join the curtains together with the clasps, so that the tabernacle is a unit.

7 “You are to make curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle; you are to make eleven curtains. **8** The length of each curtain is to be forty-five feet, and the width of each curtain is to be six feet – the same size for the eleven curtains. **9** You are to join five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. You are to double over the sixth curtain at the front of the tent. **10**

You are to make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and fifty loops along the edge of the curtain that joins the second set. **11** You are to make fifty bronze clasps and put the clasps into the loops and join the tent together so that it is a unit. **12** Now the part that remains of the curtains of the tent – the half curtain that remains will hang over at the back of the tabernacle. **13**

The foot and a half on the one side and the foot and a half on the other side of what remains in the length of the curtains of the tent will hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on one side and the other side, to cover it.

14 “You are to make a covering for the tent out of ram skins dyed red and over that a covering of fine leather.

15 “You are to make the frames for the tabernacle out of acacia wood as uprights. **16** Each frame is to be fifteen feet long, and each frame is to be two feet three inches wide, **17** with two projections per frame parallel one to another. You are to make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. **18** So you are to make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side, **19** and you are to make forty silver bases to go under the twenty frames – two bases

under the first frame for its two projections, and likewise two bases under the next frame for its two projections; **20** and for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, twenty frames, **21** and their forty silver bases, two bases under the first frame, and two bases under the next frame. **22** And for the back of the tabernacle on the west you will make six frames. **23**

You are to make two frames for the corners of the tabernacle on the back. **24** At the two corners they must be doubled at the lower end and finished together at the top in one ring. So it will be for both. **25** So there are to be eight frames and their silver bases, sixteen bases, two bases under the first frame, and two bases under the next frame.

26 “You are to make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, **27** and five bars for the frames on the second side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames on the back of the tabernacle on the west. **28** The middle bar in the center of the frames will reach from end to end. **29** You are to overlay the frames with gold and make their rings of gold to provide places for the bars, and you are to overlay the bars with gold. **30**

You are to set up the tabernacle according to the plan that you were shown on the mountain.

31 “You are to make a special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen; it is to be made with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer. **32** You are to hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold, set in four silver bases. **33** You are to hang this curtain under the clasps and bring the ark of the testimony in there behind the curtain. The curtain will make a division for you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. **34** You are to put the atonement lid on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. **35** You are to put the table outside the curtain and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table, and you are to place the table on the north side.

36 "You are to make a hanging for the entrance of the tent of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer. **37** You are to make for the hanging five posts of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, and their hooks will be gold, and you are to cast five bronze bases for them.

1 "You are to make the altar of acacia wood, seven feet six inches long, and seven feet six inches wide; the altar is to be square, and its height is to be four feet six inches.

Guzik - Exodus 27:1-21

Exodus 27 - The Court of the Tabernacle

A. The altar of burnt offering.

1. (1-2) The basic structure of the bronze altar.

"You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide; the altar shall be square; and its height *shall be* three cubits. You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze.

a. **You shall make an altar:** The idea behind the Hebrew word for **altar** is essentially, "killing-place." We also have an altar: *We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat* (Heb. 13:10).

Our altar - our "killing-place" - is the cross, where Jesus died for our sins and we follow by dying unto self and living for Jesus.

i. We lay down our lives on that same altar:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. . . . But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has

been crucified to me, and I to the world.

(Gal. 2:20 and 6:14)

b. **Make an altar of acacia wood . . .**

overlay it with bronze: The altar was a box-like structure and because of its overlay of bronze it could survive high temperatures. The altar was 7 feet 6 inches (2.5 meters) square, and 4 feet 6 inches (1.5 meters) high.

i. For years, the sides of this altar were smooth and shiny bronze. But Numbers 16 describes the rebellion of Korah, who challenged the leadership of Moses: *You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy . . . Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?* (Num. 16:3). In confirming the leadership of Moses, God judged Korah and his followers, and caused the ground to split and swallow up all the rebels of Korah. The LORD then commanded the priests to take the bronze incense-censers held by Korah and his followers, to hammer them flat, and to cover the altar of burnt offering with them, *to be a memorial to the children of Israel* (Num. 16:40).

ii. From then on, every time someone came to the altar of burnt offering, they noticed the rough, hammered finish of the bronze - and were reminded of Korah's rebellion and God's judgment against him and those who followed him.

c. **Make its horns on its four corners:** There were to be **horns** on the altar, so the altar would "reach out" to all directions. In sacrifice, atoning blood was applied to each horn.

2. (3-8) Accessories for the altar.

"Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze.

You shall make a grate for it, a network of

bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. You shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. And you

shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. The poles

shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make *it*.

a. Make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans: These utensils were used in the preparation of the offerings and the maintenance of the altar. Each was specially

made for the tabernacle out of bronze and each was set-aside for the work of the tabernacle.

b. Make a grate for it, a network of bronze: The **grate** provided a floor for the altar so the ashes and burnt remains fell down through the **network of bronze**. The grate also had the **rings** and the **poles** with which the altar was carried.

B. The courtyard and the gate.

1. (9-15) The hangings for the perimeter of the courtyard.

"You shall also make the court of the tabernacle.

For the south side *there shall be* hangings for the court *made of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *shall be* bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *shall be* silver. Likewise along the length of the north side *there shall be* hangings one hundred *cubits* long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver. And along the width of the court on the west side *shall be* hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. The width of the court on the east side *shall be* fifty cubits. The hangings on *one*

side *of the gate shall be* fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. And on the other side *shall be* hangings of fifteen *cubits, with* their three pillars and their three sockets.

a. **Also make the court of the tabernacle:** The courtyard was marked off by a **fine linen** fence, white in color. It provided an area of 150 feet (50 meters) by 75 feet (25 meters).

b. **Its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets shall be bronze:** The short linen "fence" surrounding the courtyard was held up by a system of bronze **pillars**, twenty on the long sides and ten pillars on the short side of the rectangular-shaped court, with three pillars on the side with the entrance to the tabernacle.

i. Exo. 27:18 tells us that the pillars were 7.5 feet (2.5 meters) high. Each had a bronze base and silver top piece, and a silver hook for hanging the linen upon.

2. (16) The gate to the courtyard.

"For the gate of the court *there shall be* a screen twenty cubits long, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It *shall have* four pillars and four sockets.

a. **For the gate of the court:** The gate was on the east side, the same side as the gate to the tent of the tabernacle. It was woven from the four colors used for the weavings of the tabernacle: **blue and purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen thread.**

b. **A screen twenty cubits long:** Though there was only one gate to the courtyard, it was large - 30 feet (10 meters) wide. This was the only entrance to the court of the tent of meeting.

3. (17-19) Other details regarding the courtyard.

"All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks *shall be* of silver and their sockets of bronze. The

length of the court *shall be* one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, *made of* fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, *shall be* of bronze.

a. All the pillars around the court shall

have bands of silver: Each pillar had a top of silver, making it shiny and visible from afar in the bright desert. Each pillar also had a **socket of bronze**, or a base of bronze. Refining through the fire makes bronze.

i. Silver (a metal illustrating redemption) was the foundation for the tent of meeting. It

was also the top - the most visible part - of the pillars surrounding the courtyard. But the courtyard fence hung on a foundation of refined bronze - the judgment Jesus took in our place.

b. The pegs of the court: These helped anchor down the flaps of the tabernacle and the gates, and were made of bronze.

c. The *court* of the tabernacle or the temple is an important theme throughout the rest of the Old Testament. This is mainly because the temple itself was inaccessible except to a few priests. All others in Israel met God in the court.

We can say by application that God also invites us to come into His courts to praise Him.

· *Blessed is the man You choose, and cause to approach You, that he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, of Your holy temple.* (Psa. 65:4)

· *My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.* (Psa. 84:2)

· *For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in*

the tents of wickedness. (Psa. 84:10) · Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

(Psa. 92:13)

· Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts.

(Psa. 96:8)

· Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. (Psa. 100:4) · I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD

now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD! (Psa. 116:17-19)

· Praise the LORD! Praise the name of the LORD; praise Him, O you servants of the LORD! You who stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God.

(Psa. 135:1-2)

i. Under the New Covenant we appreciate this longing for the court of God's house, but we don't need to stop there.

We can come - not only to the courts, but also right on into the holy presence of God.

We thank God for the right to come into his courts, but we don't have to stop there.

d. In overview, in coming to the tabernacle, one saw a white linen fence, with shiny spots of silver on the posts holding up the fence, surrounded by thousands of black tents, with the pillar of cloud over a unassuming tent in the midst of the courtyard covered with badger's skin.

i. The entire tabernacle was a *tent* - a moveable structure. God wanted Israel to know He was with them wherever they went. It wasn't a case of "You come to Me," but the idea was "I have come to You".

ii. "The Hebrews were meant to feel that the God of their fathers was a fellow-pilgrim, that where they pitched He pitched, that their enemies, difficulties, and long toilsome marches were His." (Meyer)

4. (20-21) The oil for the lamps on the lampstand.

"And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.

In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which *is* before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. *It shall be* a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

a. **That they bring you pure oil of pressed**

olives for the light: The oil for the lamps on the lampstand - the only light in the tabernacle - came from **pressed olives**, not beaten olives.

We, like Paul, may be *hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed* (2Co. 4:8) - and God uses our times of pressing for His glory.

b. **Aaron and his sons shall tend it from**

evening until morning: The priests were to **tend** the lamps, making sure that the lamps had oil to burn and that their wicks were trimmed, so that the lamps would never go out

- especially during the night.

i. God never wanted the lamps to lose their fire. Only by a continual supply of oil and trimming of the wicks could keep them burning. We can only continue to be on fire for God if we are continually supplied with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and are "trimmed"

by God to bear more light.

ii. In dark days there is all the more reason

to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be

"trimmed wicks" for the LORD. *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to*

give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2Co. 4:6) For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8).

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2 You are to make its four horns on its four corners; its horns will be part of it, and you are to overlay it with bronze. **3** You are to make its pots for the ashes, its shovels, its tossing bowls, its meat hooks, and its fire pans – you are to make all its utensils of bronze. **4** You are to make a grating for it, a network of bronze, and you are to make on the network four bronze rings on its four corners. **5** You are to put it under the ledge of the altar below, so that the network will come halfway up the altar. **6** You are to make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and you are to overlay them with bronze. **7** The poles are to be put into the rings so that the poles will be on two sides of the altar when carrying it. **8** You are to make the altar hollow, out of boards. Just as it was shown you on the mountain, so they must make it.

9 “You are to make the courtyard of the tabernacle. For the south side there are to be hangings for the courtyard of fine twisted linen, one hundred fifty feet long for one side, **10** with twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. **11**

Likewise for its length on the north side, there are to be hangings for one hundred fifty feet, with twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts. **12** The width of the court on the west side is to be seventy-five feet with hangings, with their ten posts and

their ten bases. **13** The width of the court on the east side, toward the sunrise, is to be seventy-five feet. **14** The hangings on one side of the gate are to be twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. **15** On the second side there are to be hangings twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. **16** For the gate of the courtyard there is to be a curtain of thirty feet, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twined linen, the work of an embroiderer, with four posts and their four bases. **17** All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands; their hooks are to be silver, and their bases bronze. **18** The length of the courtyard is to be one hundred fifty feet and the width seventy-five feet, and the height of the fine twisted linen hangings is to be seven and a half feet, with their bronze bases. **19** All the utensils of the tabernacle used in all its service, all its tent pegs, and all the tent pegs of the courtyard are to be made of bronze.

20 "You are to command the Israelites that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, so that the lamps will burn regularly. **21** In the tent of meeting outside the curtain that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons are to arrange it from evening to morning before the LORD. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for generations to come.

1 "And you, bring near to you your brother Aaron and his sons with him from among the Israelites, so that they may minister as my priests – Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Guzik - Exodus 28:1-43

Exodus 28 - Garments for Priests

A. The command to make garments for the priests.

1. (1-2) The purpose of the garments.

"Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as

priest, Aaron *and* Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

a. Take Aaron your brother, and his sons

with him: The priesthood of Israel was not "earned" nor aspired to. It could only be inherited by birthright. One must be born into a priestly family.

i. The priesthood was no place for ambition or self-glory. It was only entered into by God's call and invitation. In the New Covenant, our priesthood is also not earned nor aspired to. We are priests because of our new birth into Jesus' priestly family (1Pe. 2:5).

b. Make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty:

The priestly garments were made **for glory and for beauty**. Since there was something glorious and beautiful - indeed, "heavenly" about the priestly service, it was appropriate to make the garments glorious and beautiful.

i. "Is then the dismal *black*, now worn by almost all kinds of priests and ministers, *for glory and for beauty*? Is it emblematic of any thing that is good, glorious, or excellent? How unbecoming the *glad tidings* announced by Christian ministers is a colour emblematical of nothing but *mourning* and *woe*, *sin*, *desolation*, and *death*!" (Clarke) 2. (3-4) What to make and who must make it.

"So you shall speak to all *who are* gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And these *are* the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

a. Speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's

garments: God promised a special gifting from the Holy Spirit given to the craftsmen of these garments.

i. If it is really done to the glory of God, practical, manual service requires the leading of the Holy Spirit just as much as what we normally consider to be "spiritual" service.

b. That he may minister to Me: Three times in these first four verses, this command is repeated. Priests - under the old or new covenants - have their first ministry to God Himself.

B. Garments for the High Priest.

1. (5-14) The ephod.

"They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, artistically worked.

It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and *so* it shall be joined together. And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which *is* on it, shall be of the same workmanship, *made of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen. Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth.

With the work of an engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel.

So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. You shall

also make settings of gold, and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.

a. **Make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen,**

artistically worked: The **ephod** was essentially an ornate apron-like garment, made of gold, blue, purple and scarlet thread.

b. **Take two onyx stones and engrave on**

them the names of the sons of Israel: On the shoulder straps were polished gemstones on each strap, with the inscription of six of the tribes on each stone, so the High Priest would **bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial.**

i. While the first ministry of a priest is always unto God Himself, a priest also is constantly connected to the people, bearing them on his shoulders. The shoulders are a place of *work*; therefore in the priest's ministry unto the LORD, he also worked for and with the people.

2. (15-30) The breastplate.

"You shall make the breastplate of judgment.

Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, you shall make it. It shall be doubled into a square: a span *shall be* its length, and a span *shall be* its width. And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: *The first row shall be* a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; *this shall be* the first row; the second row *shall be* a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

They shall be set in gold settings. And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes. You shall

make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. Then you shall put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; and the *other* two ends of the two braided *chains* you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. And two *other* rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy *place*, as a memorial before the LORD continually. And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD.

So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually."

a. **Make the breastplate of judgment:** The breastplate was also made with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread. It was attached to the ephod with gold chains.

b. **Put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones:** On the breastplate were four rows of three gemstones, each stone having one of the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on it. In wearing the breastplate, the High Priest would **bear the names of the sons of Israel . . . over his heart.**

i. It was not enough that the High Priest work for the people (having them on his shoulders). He must also *love* the people - that is, bear them on his heart.

ii. It isn't enough for a priest to have a heart for God. He must also have a heart for the people, and bear them on his heart in his entire ministry unto the LORD.

c. **A sardius, a topaz, and an emerald:** This begins a list of twelve gemstones set in the breastplate of the high priest. It is impossible to know exactly what all of these gemstones were; but we can come to some likely conclusions.

Rev. 21:19-20 describes the foundations of the walls of the New Jerusalem with a series of twelve gemstones, which may answer to these stones in the breastplate.

i. We cannot neglect the fact God commanded the tribes to have their names inscribed on *gemstones* - truly precious things. God's people are indeed precious to Him.

d. **Put in the breastplate of judgment the**

Urim and the Thummim: Three times in this passage the breastplate is called **the breastplate of judgment** because it held the **Urim and Thummim** which were tools for discerning God's will.

i. The use of the discerning tools of **Urim and Thummim** is described on a few occasions (Num. 27:21, 1Sa. 28:6, Ezr. 2:63, and Neh. 7:65) and their use may be implied in other passages (Jdg. 1:1; 20:18, 23).

ii. The names **Urim and Thummim** mean "Lights and Perfections." We aren't sure what they were or how they were used. The best guess is that they were a pair of stones, one light and another dark, and each stone

indicated a "yes" or "no" from God. The High Priest would ask God a question, reach into the breastplate, and pull out either a "yes" or a "no."

iii. Meyer suggests the **Urim and Thummim** were brilliant diamonds, which flashed with a "yes" or dim with a "no" answer from God.

iv. Many consider the **Urim and Thummim** as crude tools of discernment. In fact, they are better than the tools many Christians use today. It would be better to use the **Urim and Thummim** than rely on feelings, or outward appearances, or to simply use no discernment!

3. (31-35) The robe.

"You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue.

There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy *place* before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die."

a. **Make the robe of the ephod all of blue:** This was the basic covering of the priest, made of all blue, and seamless and untornd for the head opening.

b. **Bells of gold between them all around:** On its hem, between the ornate

pomegranates of blue and purple, were

bells, so the priest could be heard while

ministering before God - if he were to die, the bells would stop ringing and he could be pulled out of the Most Holy Place.

4. (36-38) The turban and its engraving.

"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, *like* the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And

you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD."

a. **It shall be on the front of the turban:** The turban was a simple wound linen

headpiece. More important than the turban itself was the gold plate with the inscription

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

b. **That Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel**

hallow in all their holy gifts: Even the gifts and sacrifices Aaron and the other priests brought before the Lord were touched with

iniquity. Yet when God's appointed priest in God brought them in God's appointed way, God **accepted** them.

c. **That they might be accepted before the**

LORD: Holiness - not as a legalistic list of rules, but in the power of a life separated to God - is essential for anyone who will appear before God. Heb. 12:14 reinforces this principle: *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*

5. (39) The tunic, the turban, and the sash.

"You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen *thread*, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work."

a. **Skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen:** These basic garments are simply described as being woven of fine linen.

6. (40-43) Garments for the sons of Aaron.

"For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate

them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests. And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy *place*, that they do not incur iniquity and die. *It shall be* a statute forever to him and his descendants after him."

a. **For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics:** Though the "regular" priests had special garments, they were simple clothes of fine linen. They were special, but not much compared to the glory and beauty of the High Priest's garments.

i. This is because the "regular" priests, though important, had a far lesser office

than the High Priest - and were appropriately clothed for this lower position.

ii. Even so, the High Priest's clothing, in total, speaks more of Jesus' glory and beauty than of ours. We are content with simple linen robes.

b. **Linen trousers to cover their nakedness:** The priests - all of the priests - were to wear undergarments, so it would be impossible for their nakedness to be exposed while ministering.

i. This was probably a reaction to the nakedness of many pagan priests while performing their rituals.

ii. Also, the trousers were to be made of cool **linen**, instead of warm wool. God doesn't want His servants to sweat.

C. A Contrast between Jesus' clothing when He accomplished His great priestly work and the garments of the High Priest.

1. Jesus wore no beautiful ephod - only a purple robe for mocking.
2. Jesus had no precious gems were on His shoulders, only a cross that we deserved.
3. Jesus had no breastplate with "Israel on His heart," yet He died of a broken heart for Israel - and all of mankind.
4. As the High Priest, Jesus had a seamless robe that was not torn, but it was stripped away at the cross.
5. Jesus heard no delicate sound of bells proving that the High Priest was alive, only the sound of pounding nails insuring our High Priest's death.
6. Jesus wore no fine linen turban, rather a painful crown of thorns.
7. Jesus had no headplate reading *HOLINESS TO THE LORD*, but a life and death showing nothing but holiness to the LORD!
8. Jesus had no linen trousers to hide His nakedness, rather He bore our sins on the cross in a naked shame.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** You must make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for glory and for beauty. **3** You are to speak to all who are specially skilled, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, so that they may make Aaron's garments to set him apart to minister as my priest. **4** Now these are the garments that they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fitted tunic, a turban, and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron and for his sons, that they may minister as my priests. **5** The artisans are to use the gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen.

6 "They are to make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen, the work of an artistic designer. **7** It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be joined together. **8** The artistically woven waistband of the ephod that is on it is to be like it, of one

piece with the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen.

9 “You are to take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, **10** six of their names on one stone, and the six remaining names on the second stone, according to the order of their birth. **11** You are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel with the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a seal; you are to have them set in gold filigree settings. **12** You are to put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod, stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and Aaron will bear their names before the LORD

on his two shoulders for a memorial. **13** You are to make filigree settings of gold **14** and two braided chains of pure gold, like a cord, and attach the chains to the settings.

15 “You are to make a breastpiece for use in making decisions, the work of an artistic designer; you are to make it in the same fashion as the ephod; you are to make it of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen. **16** It is to be square when doubled, nine inches long and nine inches wide. **17** You are to set in it a setting for stones, four rows of stones, a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl – the first row; **18** and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; **19** and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; **20** and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They are to be enclosed in gold in their filigree settings. **21** The stones are to be for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, according to the number of their names. Each name according to the twelve tribes is to be like the engravings of a seal.

22 “You are to make for the breastpiece braided chains like cords of pure gold, **23** and you are to make for the breastpiece two gold rings and attach the two rings to the upper two ends of the breastpiece. **24** You are to attach the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece; **25** the other two ends of the two chains you

will attach to the two settings and then attach them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it. **26** You are to make two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece, on its edge that is on the inner side of the ephod. **27** You are to make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod. **28** They are to tie the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it may be above the waistband of the ephod, and so that the breastpiece will not be loose from the ephod. **29** Aaron will bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of decision over his heart when he goes into the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

30 “You are to put the Urim and the Thummim into the breastpiece of decision; and they are to be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD. Aaron is to bear the decisions of the Israelites over his heart before the LORD continually.

31 “You are to make the robe of the ephod completely blue.

32 There is to be an opening in its top in the center of it, with an edge all around the opening, the work of a weaver, like the opening of a collar, so that it cannot be torn. **33** You are to make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet all around its hem and bells of gold between them all around.

34 The pattern is to be a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. **35** The robe is to be on Aaron as he ministers, and his sound will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the LORD and when he leaves, so that he does not die.

36 “You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it the way a seal is engraved: “Holiness to the LORD.”

37 You are to attach to it a blue cord so that it will be on the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban, **38** It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron will bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the Israelites are to sanctify by all their holy

gifts; it will always be on his forehead, for their acceptance before the LORD. **39** You are to weave the tunic of fine linen and make the turban of fine linen, and make the sash the work of an embroiderer.

40 “For Aaron’s sons you are to make tunics, sashes, and headbands for glory and for beauty.

41 “You are to clothe them – your brother Aaron and his sons with him – and anoint them and ordain them and set them apart as holy, so that they may minister as my priests. **42** Make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked bodies; they must cover from the waist to the thighs. **43** These must be on Aaron and his sons when they enter to the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they bear no iniquity and die. It is to be a perpetual ordinance for him and for his descendants after him.

1 “Now this is what you are to do for them to consecrate them so that they may minister as my priests. Take a young bull and two rams without blemish; Guzik - Exodus 29:1-46

Exodus 29 - The Consecration of the Priests

A. Preparation for consecration.

1. (1a) The purpose of the ceremony.

And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests:

a. **This is what you shall do:** This ceremony was actually carried out in Leviticus 8.

b. **To hallow them for ministering to Me as priests:** The purpose of the ceremony was to **hallow them** - that is, to set the priests aside for God's purpose.

2. (1b-3) Ingredients needed for consecration.

Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.

a. **One young bull and two rams without blemish:**

The ceremony for consecration

required animals intended for sacrifice.

Consecration couldn't happen without shedding sacrificial blood.

b. **Unleavened bread, unleavened cakes:**

The ceremony for consecration required bread

for fellowship with God. Consecration couldn't happen without true fellowship with God.

3. (4) The washing.

And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the

door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water.

a. **Aaron and his sons:**

This was not a ceremony for just anyone in Israel. There were special consecration ceremonies available to

anyone - such as the vow of a Nazirite in

Numbers 6. But the ceremony described here

and carried out in Leviticus 8 was for *priests*, for **Aaron and his sons**.

b. **You shall bring to the door of the**

tabernacle of meeting:

This process of consecration didn't take place *inside* the tabernacle. It happened outside, at **the door of the tabernacle of meeting**. It was something others could see.

c. **And you shall wash them with water:**

The process of consecration began with

cleansing. All priestly ministries began with

cleansing, and a cleansing that was *received*: **you shall wash them**. Aaron and his sons did not wash themselves; they *received* a washing.

i. This was humbling, because it took place

publicly at **the door of the tabernacle of**

meeting. We cannot be cleansed from our sin without being humbled first.

ii. This great cleansing was a one-time thing.

From then on they just needed to cleanse their hands and their feet.

iii. Like these ancient priests, every Christian is washed by the work of God's word (Eph.

5:26), by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5). This cleansing work was accomplished by the death of Jesus for us (Rev. 1:5) and appropriated by faith.

4. (5-9) The clothing and the anointing.

Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. And you shall take the anointing oil, pour *it* on his head, and anoint him.

Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute.

So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

a. Take the garments, put the tunic on

Aaron: After being cleansed, the priest had to be clothed - but not in his own clothes, but in clothes given by God.

i. Like these ancient priests, every believer is clothed in Jesus Christ and in his righteousness (Rev. 3:5). These are clothes that are given freely by Jesus, but received and "worn" by faith.

ii. "Note, that *these garments were provided for the m*. They were at no expense in buying them, nor labor in weaving them, nor skill in making them; they had simply to put them on. And you, dear child of God, are to put on the garments which Jesus Christ has provided for you, at his own cost, and freely bestows upon you out of boundless love." (Spurgeon)

b. And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him: Priests must be anointed. The oil (a picture of the Holy Spirit) was *poured* over their heads, indicating that it was not in small measure (Psa. 133:2).

i. Like these ancient priests, every believer has an anointing (1Jo. 2:20) that they may receive and walk in by faith.

5. (10-14) The sin offering.

You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull.

Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. You shall take *some* of the blood of the bull and put *it* on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them, and burn *them* on the altar. But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It *is* a sin offering.

a. Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull: The washing at the door of the tabernacle was only one aspect of the symbolic cleansing from sin. There had to be the punishment of the guilty, and this happened. As Aaron and his sons **put their hands on the head of the bull**, they symbolically transferred their sin to the bull.

i. "The Hebrew word means more than lightly placing the hand, it gives the idea of pressing hard upon the bullock's head. They came each one and leaned upon the victim, loading him with their burden, signifying their acceptance of its substitution, their joy that the Lord would accept that victim in

their stead. When they put their hands on the bullock, they made a confession of sin." (Spurgeon)

ii. Like these ancient priests, every believer can only be consecrated to God through sacrifice. Our consecration should be greater, because it was made through a far greater sacrifice - the sacrifice of God's own Son.

b. You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar

with your finger: The altar was sanctified with the blood of the **sin offering**, and the best of the animal was burnt before the LORD - the rest was destroyed outside the camp. The sin offering said, "We have failed to give our best to God. This animal now gives its best to atone for our failure, and we decide to live now giving our best, even as this animal who dies in our place."

i. The idea behind the ancient Hebrew word for **altar** is essentially, "killing-place." The ancient altar - a place of death - was made holy and was consecrated to God. Like that

ancient altar, the altar of the New Covenant - the cross - is transformed from a place to death to a place set apart to bring life.

6. (15-18) The burnt offering.

You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and sprinkle *it* all around on the altar. Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put *them* with its pieces and with its head. And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It *is* a burnt offering to the LORD; it *is* a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

a. Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; and you shall kill the ram: As the sin offering before it, the **burnt offering** also symbolically

received the sins of the priests and they laid their hands on the head of the animal and confessed their sin.

b. And you shall burn the whole ram on

the altar: The ram was completely burnt before the LORD, with its blood sprinkled on the altar. The burnt offering said, "We have failed to give our all to God. This animal now gives its all to atone for our failure, and we decide to live now giving our all, even as this animal who dies in our place."

B. The consecration offering.

1. (19-21) The application of blood.

You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

a. Also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head

of the ram: Atonement for sin was performed with the sin offering and the burnt offering. Yet in their consecration, the priests still had to identify with the sacrificial victim. Their identification with the sacrifice went beyond atonement.

b. Kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron: To express the idea of consecration, blood from the ram is placed on the ear, thumb, and toe of the priest. It was blood from the ram - not the wool, not the fat. God wanted the

"life" of the sacrificial victim to mark His consecrated priests.

i. Lev. 17:11 is one of many passages that

expresses this principle: *For the life of the flesh is in the blood*. God wanted the *life* of the sacrificial victim to be evident in the *body* of the priest.

c. **Tip of the right ear . . . thumb of their right hand . . . big toe of their right foot**: These consecrated priests were stained with the blood of sacrifice. They should *hear* differently because the blood was on their **ear**. They should *work* differently because the blood was on their **thumb**. They should *walk* differently because the blood was on their **toe**.

i. Specifically, it was applied to the **right** ear, hand, and foot. This isn't because God felt they could do whatever they wanted to

with their left ear, hand, and foot. It is because the **right** side was considered superior, with more strength and skill (because most people are right-handed).

God wanted their *best* to be dedicated to Him.

d. **You shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments**: The blood alone wasn't enough.

God wanted **blood** mixed with **oil**, and to have the *mixture* sprinkled on the priests. There was to be a combination of both the sacrifice and the spirit (represented by the **anointing oil**).

i. "Yes, brethren, we need to know that double anointing, the blood of Jesus which cleanses, and the oil of the Holy Spirit which perfumes us. It is well to see how these two blend in one . . . It is a terrible blunder to set the blood and the oil in opposition, they must always go together." (Spurgeon)

2. (22-28) The wave offering.

Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver, the

two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it *is* a ram of consecration), one loaf of bread, one cake *made with* oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD; and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. You shall receive them back from their hands and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD. Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration and wave it *as* a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of *that* which *is* for Aaron and of *that* which is for his sons. It shall be from the children of Israel *for* Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, *that is*, their heave offering to the LORD.

a. **Also you shall take the fat of the ram:** The second ram used in the consecration ceremony - the ram whose blood was applied to the ear, hand, and foot of the priest - was used as a **heave offering** and **peace offerings**.

b. **You shall wave them before the LORD . . . burn them on the altar as a burnt offering:** Part of this second ram - the best parts - was put together with the **bread**, **cake**, and the **wafer** and was first *waved* before God in an act of presentation. Then these portions were burnt on the altar as an act of complete devotion.

c. **It shall be your portion:** The remaining meat portions of this ram were given to Aaron and the other priests, after those portions were presented to God as a **wave offering**. It was then cooked and eaten by the priests during the days of their consecration ceremony.

i. The second ram - after the ram presented as a burnt offering - had its *life* applied to the consecrated priests. First its life was applied with the application of blood to the

ear, hand, and foot of the priest. Then through a ritual meal, its life was applied by the priest taking the ram into himself.

ii. The eating did not *begin* the process of consecration. It came *after* the washing, the clothing, and the blood-atonement of the priests. The eating speaks of the *continuing relationship* of the priest with God. "Let not this distinction be forgotten; the eating of the sacrifice is not intended to give life, for no dead man can eat, but to sustain the life

which is there already. A believing look at Christ makes you live, but spiritual life must be fed and sustained." (Spurgeon)

iii. In this way, eating is a good picture of a healthy, continuing relationship with Jesus.

- Eating is *personal*. No one can eat for you, and no one can have a relationship with Jesus on your behalf.

- Eating is *inward*. It does no good to be around food or to rub food on the

outside of your body - you must *take it*

in. We must take Jesus unto ourselves

inwardly, not merely in an external way.

- Eating is *active*. Some medicines are received passively - they are injected

under the skin and go to work. Such

medicines could even be received while

one sleeps - but no one can eat while

asleep. We must *actively* take Jesus unto ourselves.

- Eating arises *out of a sense of need*

and produces *a sense of satisfaction*. We will have a healthy relationship with

Jesus when we *sense our need* for Him

and *receive the satisfaction* the relationship brings.

3. (29-37) The week of consecration.

And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the holy *place*. And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat *them*, because they *are* holy. And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings, or of the bread, remains until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it *is* holy. Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them. And you shall offer a bull every day *as* a sin offering for atonement. You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it. Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it. And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar must be holy.

a. **That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days:** With the coming generations, new descendants of Aaron would qualify for the priesthood and would be consecrated the same way. For Aaron and his descendants the consecration process took **seven days**.

b. **They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate**

and to sanctify them: For **seven days** they lived at the tabernacle and ate the **ram of the consecration** and the bread of consecration.

The consecration ceremony wasn't quick and easy. It took time, reflection, and a constant awareness of sacrifice and atonement.

i. "The Lord's part was consumed with fire upon the altar, and another portion was eaten by man in the holy place. The peace offering was thus an open declaration of the communion which had been established between God and man, so that they ate together, rejoicing in the same offering." (Spurgeon)

ii. "I know some good people who are very busy indeed in the services of God, and I am very delighted that they should be, but I would caution them against working and never eating. They give up attending the means of grace as hearers, because they have so much to do as workers." (Spurgeon) c. **But an**

outsider shall not eat them,

because they are holy: Few among us today are of the lineage of Aaron, but we have the right to receive and enjoy this priestly

consecration and relationship based not only on the clear declaration of the New Testament

(1Pe. 2:5 and 2:9) but also upon principles of the *Old Covenant*.

i. Lev. 22:11 says, *But if the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his*

food. Since Jesus, our High Priest, has purchased us with His own life, we may eat of the priestly portion. And since we are born again as children of God - *born in his house*, the family of our High Priest - we also *may eat his food* and enjoy the

priestly privileges of our High Priest.

d. **And you shall offer a bull every day as a sin offering for atonement:** Every day there was another large animal to sacrifice and use its blood for atonement. This daily ritual - for **seven days** in a row - reminded Aaron and the priests that any animal sacrifice could not take away sin, only providing a temporary covering.

4. (38-41) The continual consecration.

Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually.

One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. With the one lamb shall be one-tenth *of an ephah* of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine *as* a drink offering.

And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

a. **Two lambs . . . day by day continually:** After the ceremony of consecration the priests continued with daily sacrifices, one **in the morning** and the other **at twilight**. Every day was given to God, beginning and ending by sacrifices of atonement and consecration.

b. **A drink offering:** This was wine given to God as a sacrifice, "poured out" before Him as a demonstration of completely emptying one's self to God.

i. The Apostle Paul used the terminology of the **drink offering** to express his complete devotion to God, and his possibly soon martyrdom (Phi. 2:17).

c. **For a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD:** These burnt offerings - completely consumed by fire - pleased God and "smelled good" to Him. God is honored and glorified by our complete surrender to Him.

5. (42-43) Why God wanted the daily sacrifices and continual consecration.

This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and *the tabernacle* shall be sanctified by My glory.

a. **This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations:** Except for times of captivity and national apostasy, these daily sacrifices continued in Israel up through the time of the New Testament. Luke 1 describes Zacharias (the father of John the Baptist) ministering at a morning sacrifice, which developed into what we might call "morning devotions" for ancient Israel.

b. **I will meet you:** God wanted consecrated priests and a worshipping nation, and not because He simply wanted a "well-trained work-force." God wanted consecrated priests and daily sacrifice so He could **meet** with and **speak** to His people.

i. This is the great reason for consecration, for full surrender to God. It isn't primarily so we can be better *workers* for God, but so that we can enjoy deeper and more meaningful relationship with Him. If this is of little interest to us, we will never be properly motivated to true consecration.

c. **And the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory:** It was the *presence of God* that truly sanctified and consecrated the **tabernacle** and the priests. It wasn't primarily because of what the priests did. What the priests did in consecrate was *remove the barriers* to the radiant glory of God.

6. (44-46) **So I will sanctify.**

So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. I will dwell among the children of Israel and

will be their God. And they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I *am* the LORD their God.

a. **So I will consecrate:** God makes it clear *who* performs the work of consecration. We are tempted to think that *we sanctify our self* because we are so immersed in the sanctifying process and because it draws so much out of us. Yet God does the work - what we do is remove barriers and spend time with the focus on Him.

b. **To minister to Me as priests:** Aaron and his sons had a ministry to the people of Israel, but their first ministry was to the LORD. They might be successful in ministry to the people, but if they failed in their ministry to the LORD, their ministry failed.

i. "The best part of all Christian work is that part which only God sees." (Andrew Bonar) c. **And they shall know that I am the LORD**

their God: God promised to show His glory through consecrated priests. When Moses and Aaron performed this ceremony of

consecration, Lev. 9:23-24 tells us the result: *Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD*

and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

i. There is a price to pay for being fully surrendered to God. The ceremony of consecration was long, bloody, and it took persistence to complete. Yet the reward was far greater than the cost - the glory of the LORD was revealed not only to the consecrated priests, but to the people in general.

d. I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God: God again stressed the idea of *relationship* in the process of consecration. This worship-filled relationship with God is both the *instrument* and the *fruit* of consecration.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** and bread made without yeast, and perforated cakes without yeast mixed with oil, and wafers without yeast spread with oil – you are to make them using fine wheat flour. **3** You are to put them in one basket and present them in the basket, along with the bull and the two rams.

4 “You are to present Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the tent of meeting. You are to wash them with water **5** and take the garments and clothe Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece; you are to fasten the ephod on him by using the skillfully woven waistband. **6** You are to put the turban on his head and put the holy diadem on the turban. **7** You are to take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him. **8** You are to present his sons and clothe them with tunics **9** and wrap the sashes around Aaron and his sons and put headbands on them, and so the ministry of priesthood will belong to them by a perpetual ordinance. Thus you are to consecrate Aaron and his sons.

10 “You are to present the bull at the front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons are to put their hands on the head of the bull. **11** You are to kill the bull before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting **12** and take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; all the rest of the blood you are to pour out at the base of the altar. **13** You are to take all the fat that covers the entrails, and the lobe that is above the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar. **14** But the meat of the bull, its skin,

and its dung you are to burn up outside the camp. It is the purification offering.

15 “You are to take one ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head, **16** and you are to kill the ram and take its blood and splash it all around on the altar.

17 Then you are to cut the ram into pieces and wash the entrails and its legs and put them on its pieces and on its head **18** and burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a soothing aroma; it is an offering made by fire to the LORD.

19 “You are to take the second ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head, **20** and you are to kill the ram and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron, on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot, and then splash the blood all around on the altar. **21** You are to take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on his sons’ garments with him, so that he may be holy, he and his garments along with his sons and his sons’ garments.

22 “You are to take from the ram the fat, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and the right thigh – for it is the ram for consecration – **23** and one round flat cake of bread, one perforated cake of oiled bread, and one wafer from the basket of bread made without yeast that is before the LORD. **24** You are to put all these in Aaron’s hands and in his sons’ hands, and you are to wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. **25** Then you are to take them from their hands and burn them on the altar for a burnt offering, for a soothing aroma before the LORD. It is an offering made by fire to the LORD. **26** You are to take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration; you are to wave it as a wave offering before the LORD, and it is to be your share. **27** You

are to sanctify the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution, which were waved and lifted up as a contribution from the ram of consecration, from what belongs to Aaron and to his sons. **28** It is to belong to Aaron and to his sons from the Israelites, by a perpetual ordinance, for it is a contribution.

It is to be a contribution from the Israelites from their peace offerings, their contribution to the LORD.

29 “The holy garments that belong to Aaron are to belong to his sons after him, so that they may be anointed in them and consecrated in them. **30** The priest who succeeds him from his sons, when he first comes to the tent of meeting to minister in the Holy Place, is to wear them for seven days.

31 “You are to take the ram of the consecration and cook its meat in a holy place. **32** Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat of the ram and the bread that was in the basket at the entrance of the tent of meeting. **33** They are to eat those things by which atonement was made to consecrate and to set them apart, but no one else may eat them, for they are holy. **34** If any of the meat from the consecration offerings or any of the bread is left over until morning, then you are to burn up what is left over. It must not be eaten, because it is holy.

35 “Thus you are to do for Aaron and for his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; you are to consecrate them for seven days. **36** Every day you are to prepare a bull for a purification offering for atonement.

You are to purge the altar by making atonement for it, and you are to anoint it to set it apart as holy. **37** For seven days you are to make atonement for the altar and set it apart as holy. Then the altar will be most holy. Anything that touches the altar will be holy.

38 “Now this is what you are to prepare on the altar every day continually: two lambs a year old. **39** The first lamb you are to prepare in the morning, and the second lamb you are to prepare around sundown. **40** With the first lamb offer a

tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil from pressed olives, and a fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. **41** The second lamb you are to offer around sundown; you are to prepare for it the same meal offering as for the morning and the same drink offering, for a soothing aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

42 “This will be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you to speak to you there.

43 There I will meet with the Israelites, and it will be set apart as holy by my glory.

44 “So I will set apart as holy the tent of meeting and the altar, and I will set apart as holy Aaron and his sons, that they may minister as priests to me. **45** I will reside among the Israelites, and I will be their God, **46** and they will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt, so that I may reside among them. I am the LORD their God.

1 “You are to make an altar for burning incense; you are to make it of acacia wood.

Guzik - Exodus 30:1-38

Exodus 30 - More Tabernacle Related Subjects

A. The altar of incense.

1. (1-5) How to make the altar of incense.

"You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit *shall be* its length and a cubit its width; it shall be square; and two cubits *shall be* its height. Its horns *shall be* of one piece with it. And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place *them* on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

a. **Make an altar to burn incense on:** The altar of incense was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was 18

inches (0.5 meter) square and 3 feet (1 meter) high.

b. Two gold rings you shall make for it . . .

they will be holders for the poles with

which to bear it: The altar of incense was also carried by the system of rings and poles, just like the Ark of the Covenant, the table of showbread, and the brazen altar with its grate.

2. (6-10) The use of the altar of incense.

"And you shall put it before the veil that *is* before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will meet with you. Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It *is* most holy to the LORD."

a. You shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the Testimony: The altar of incense stood outside the veil, in the holy place (not in the most holy place). Therefore it was fairly close to the Ark of the Covenant, yet separated by the veil.

b. Where I will meet with you: Sprinkled throughout this description of the tabernacle and the furnishings are reminders of the purpose of the tabernacle. It is a place for man to meet with God.

b. Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense

every morning: Aaron (and other priests after him) were instructed to burn incense on this altar every day as part of their normal priestly duties, both in the morning and in the

evening (**when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it**).

i. Incense is a picture of prayer, in the sweetness of its smell and the way it ascends to heaven (*golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints*, according to Rev. 5:8). The ministry at the

altar of incense speaks of how God's people should continually come to Him in prayer.

ii. Rev. 8:3-4 describes the golden altar of incense standing before God's throne: *Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.*

c. **You shall not offer strange incense on it:** Priests were not permitted to offer God whatever you wanted on the altar of incense.

Strange incense was prohibited. Also, it was not a place of sacrifice in the sense that no animal or grain or drink offering was ever to be placed on it.

i. Prayer is not the place sacrificial atonement is made; it is the place sacrificial atonement is enjoyed. We don't save ourselves through prayer; we pray because of Jesus' saving work on the cross.

d. **Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement:** The altar of incense was not a place of sacrifice, but it was a place for atoning blood. On the Day of Atonement, Aaron had to anoint the horns of the altar of incense with blood from the atoning sacrifice.

i. Prayer does not atone for our sins, but

must always be made in reference to Jesus' atoning blood. The Day of Atonement was only once a year, but every day when the priests brought a morning and evening offering of incense they saw the blood stained horns of the altar. This was a constant reminder of the work of atoning blood.

B. The ransom money for a census.

1. (11-12) The reason for the ransom money.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when *you* number them.

a. **When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number:** Later in the book of Numbers, two significant censuses are recorded of the nation of Israel. Here God made provision to make a census without being plagued.

b. **That there may be no plague among them when you number them:** A census put Israel at risk of **plague** because a census (a numbering) signified ownership. This spoke against God's ownership of Israel, because in their thinking, a man only had the right to count or number what belonged to him. Israel didn't belong to Israel; Israel belonged to God. It was up to Him to command a counting.

i. If a count was made with receiving the ransom money, a census communicated the idea that a king or a human leader "owned" Israel, when God alone did. This was David's problem in 2Sa. 24:1-25, when David took a census without the ransom money and God

plagued Israel.

2. (13-16) How to take a census with ransom money.

"This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel *is* twenty gerahs). The half-shekel *shall be* an offering to the LORD. Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *you* give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves.

And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."

a. Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD: The census was to include everyone aged twenty and over. This seems to be the Israelite age of full adulthood in this sense.

Everyone

also had to give an equal amount - one-half shekel.

i. This was a true "flat tax" - everybody paid the same amount, rich or poor. In this sense, it is not a pattern for our giving under the New Covenant. New Covenant giving should be proportional, under the principle that we should give in proportion to our blessing. (1Co. 16:2)

ii. Instead of a pattern of our own giving, this money is a picture of the cost of our own redemption. "The *rich* were not to give *more*, the *poor* not to give less; to signify that all souls were equally precious in the sight of God, and that no difference of

outward circumstances could affect the state of the soul; all had sinned, and all must be redeemed by the same price." (Clarke)

iii. As well, *everyone* had to pay their own redemption money. No "lump sum" for every member of the tribe or family could pay it.

b. Appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting: This money was given to the service of the tabernacle. There was a great deal of silver needed in the construction of the tabernacle, and this is how it was obtained.

C. Other needs for the tabernacle.

1. (17-21) The bronze laver.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar.

And you shall put water in it, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die.

So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them; to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

a. Make a laver of bronze: The bronze laver had no specific dimensions. It was essentially a pool for ceremonial washings, set between the brazen altar and the tent of meeting.

b. Of bronze, with its base also of bronze: When it was made, the metal for the bronze laver came from the mirrors of the women of Israel (Exo. 38:8). It was a wonderful thing for people to give up the measure of their own

appearance for God's cleansing.

c. **So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die:** The bronze laver speaks of the washing that is necessary for anyone who would come to God.

i. *Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?*

Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and pure heart. (Psa. 24:3-4) ii. When Jesus washed the disciple's feet, He

told them: *He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean* (Joh.

13:10). When we come to Jesus we are initially cleansed (1Co. 6:11), but must also be continually washed from the dust and dirt of the world by having our feet washed by Jesus.

iii. An important way this washing takes place is through God's Word: *the washing of water by the word.* (Eph. 5:26) 2. (22-33) The holy anointing oil.

Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

"Also take for yourself quality spices; five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of

incense; the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. And you

shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests.

And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make *any other* like it, according to its composition. It *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds *any* like it, or whoever puts *any* of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.' "

a. Make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer:

This oil was used for anointing the priests and the articles pertaining to service. It was regarded as a sacred compound that could not be imitated nor used as normal perfuming oil.

b. It shall not be poured on man's flesh: Since oil is emblematic of the Holy Spirit, we see that the Holy Spirit is not poured out to enhance our flesh, but to glorify Himself.

c. Nor shall you make any other like it . . .

it is holy, and it shall be holy to you: This shows that the work of the Holy Spirit is never to be imitated. There is to be no place for encouraging a fleshly imitation of the gifts or operations of the Holy Spirit. To do this denies the holiness of the Holy Spirit, regarding His work as something we can do just as well on our own.

3. (34-38) The holy incense.

And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. But *as for* the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you

holy for the LORD. Whoever makes *any* like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

a. Make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer,

salted, pure, and holy: The special incense for the tabernacle was made according to the same principles as the anointing oil. God didn't want this sacred smell - symbolizing the

sweetness of prayer - to be used for human attraction or adornment.

b. Whoever makes any like it, to smell it,

he shall be cut off from his people: God was so concerned to protect the unique character of the tabernacle incense that He commanded excommunication for anyone who would make these holy things common.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Its length is to be a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half; it will be square. Its height is to be three feet, with its horns of one piece with it. **3** You are to overlay it with pure gold - its top, its four walls, and its horns - and make a surrounding border of gold for it. **4** You are to make two gold rings for it under its border, on its two flanks; you are to make them on its two sides. The rings will be places for poles to carry it with. **5** You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

6 "You are to put it in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the testimony (before the atonement lid that is over the testimony), where I will meet you. **7** Aaron is to burn sweet incense on it morning by morning; when he attends to the lamps he is to burn incense. **8** When Aaron sets up the lamps around sundown he is to burn incense on it; it is to be a regular incense offering before the LORD

throughout your generations. **9** You must not offer strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering, and you must not pour out a drink offering on it. **10** Aaron is to make

atonement on its horns once in the year with some of the blood of the sin offering for atonement; once in the year he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.”

11 The LORD spoke to Moses: **12** “When you take a census of the Israelites according to their number, then each man is to pay a ransom for his life to the LORD when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. **13** Everyone who crosses over to those who are numbered is to pay this: a half shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel weighs twenty gerahs). The half shekel is to be an offering to the LORD. **14** Everyone who crosses over to those numbered, from twenty years old and up, is to pay an offering to the LORD. **15** The rich are not to increase it, and the poor are not to pay less than the half shekel when giving the offering of the LORD, to make atonement for your lives. **16** You are to receive the atonement money from the Israelites and give it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, to make atonement for your lives.”

17 The LORD spoke to Moses: **18** “You are also to make a large bronze basin with a bronze stand for washing. You are to put it between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it, **19** and Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and their feet from it. **20** When they enter the tent of meeting, they must wash with water so that they do not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by burning incense as an offering made by fire to the LORD, **21** they must wash their hands and their feet so that they do not die. And this will be a perpetual ordinance for them and for their descendants throughout their generations.”

22 The LORD spoke to Moses: **23** “Take choice spices: twelve and a half pounds of free-flowing myrrh, half that – about six and a quarter pounds – of sweet-smelling cinnamon, six and a quarter pounds of sweet-smelling cane,

24 and twelve and a half pounds of cassia, all weighed according to the sanctuary shekel, and four quarts of olive oil. **25** You are to make this into a sacred anointing oil, a perfumed compound, the work of a perfumer. It will be sacred anointing oil.

26 "With it you are to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, **27** the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, the altar of incense, **28** the altar for the burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its base. **29** So you are to sanctify them, and they will be most holy; anything that touches them will be holy.

30 "You are to anoint Aaron and his sons and sanctify them, so that they may minister as my priests. **31** And you are to tell the Israelites: 'This is to be my sacred anointing oil throughout your generations. **32** It must not be applied to people's bodies, and you must not make any like it with the same recipe. It is holy, and it must be holy to you. **33**

Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts any of it on someone not a priest will be cut off from his people.'"

34 The LORD said to Moses: "Take spices, gum resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense of equal amounts

35 and make it into an incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer. It is to be finely ground, and pure and sacred. **36**

You are to beat some of it very fine and put some of it before the ark of the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it is to be most holy to you. **37** And the incense that you are to make, you must not make for yourselves using the same recipe; it is to be most holy to you, belonging to the LORD. **38** Whoever makes anything like it, to use as perfume, will be cut off from his people."

1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

Guzik - Exodus 31:1-18

Exodus 31 - The Call of Bezaleel and Aholiab

A. The unique gifts of Bezaleel and Aholiab.

1. (1-6) The call of Bezaleel and Aholiab.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship. And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all who are gifted

artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you:

a. **See, I have called by name Bezalel the**

son of Uri, the son of Hur: Even as God specifically chose Moses and Aaron, He also specifically chose these craftsmen for His service.

b. **I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship:** God supernaturally enabled Bezalel to do the work of building the

Tabernacle. God saw this work as just as spiritual, and just as dependent on the Holy Spirit's power, as the work Moses and Aaron did.

i. This divine empowering wasn't restricted only to Bezalel: **I have put wisdom in the hearts of all who are gifted artisans .**

God wanted every worker's labor to be blessed and prompted by the Holy Spirit.

ii. Yet, they were filled with the Holy Spirit not to work unto themselves, but unto the

LORD: **that they may make all that I have commanded you.** God's empowering isn't to be used for our own selfish ends.

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men (Col. 3:23).

2. (7-11) The list of items to be built in the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings.

"The tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that *is* on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle; the table and its utensils, the pure *gold* lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base; the garments of ministry, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy *place*. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do."

a. The tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that is on it . . . :

The list seems to be given because God wanted the work organized and attentive to each detail. Nothing should be forgotten or neglected.

b. According to all that I have commanded

you they shall do: This reminds us that God wanted the tabernacle and its furnishings built according to a specific pattern. It was a deliberate model of a heavenly reality.

B. The Sabbath.

1. (12-17) The command to respect the Sabbath.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for *it is* holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does *any* work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall

surely be put to death.

Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant. It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' "

a. **Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep:** This command was strategically placed - at the very end of all the commands to build the tabernacle.

Though God gave Israel a work to do in building the tabernacle He did not want them to do that work on the Sabbath. The rest of God still had to be respected.

b. **It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever:** Though in the New Covenant we are not bound by the Sabbath

(Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:16-17), the principle is still important. Our rest in the finished work of Jesus is never to be eclipsed by our work for God.

When workers for God are burnt-out, they have almost always allowed their work for God to be bigger in their minds than His work for them.

i. The difference between what Jesus has done for us and what we do for Him is like the difference between the sun and the moon, and the sun is almost unbelievably larger than the moon. Yet if the moon is in the exactly right (or wrong) place, it is possible for the moon to eclipse the sun.

Some Christians live in a constant state of total eclipse, allowing what they do for Jesus to seem more important than what Jesus did for them.

2. (18) God gives Moses the tablets of stone, written with His finger.

And when He had made an end of speaking with

him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

a. **Tablets of stone, written with the finger of God:** We often say that something can be changed because "it's not written in stone."

These commandments were written in **stone**.

b. **Two tablets of the Testimony:** These tablets of stone were placed in the Ark of the Testimony, also known as the Ark of the

Covenant. They were kept in the ark, later joined by Aaron's rod that budded and a jar of manna.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, **3** and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in skill, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, **4** to make artistic designs for work with gold, with silver, and with bronze, **5** and with cutting and setting stone, and with cutting wood, to work in all kinds of craftsmanship. **6** Moreover, I have also given him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and I have given ability to all the specially skilled, that they may make everything I have commanded you: **7** the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the atonement lid that is on it, all the furnishings of the tent, **8** the table with its utensils, the pure lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, **9** the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils, the large basin with its base, **10** the woven garments, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons, to minister as priests, **11** the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the Holy Place. They will make all these things just as I have commanded you."

12 The LORD said to Moses, **13** "Tell the Israelites, 'Surely you must keep my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may

know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. **14**

So you must keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you.

Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death; indeed, if anyone does any work on it, then that person will be cut off from among his people. **15** Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; anyone who does work on the Sabbath day must surely be put to death. **16** The Israelites must keep the Sabbath by observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. **17**

It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”

18 He gave Moses two tablets of testimony when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, tablets of stone written by the finger of God.

1 When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, “Get up, make us gods that will go before us.

As for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!”

Guzik - Exodus 32:1-35

Exodus 32 - The Golden Calf

A. Israel steps into idolatry.

1. (1) The people make a request.

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him,

"Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

a. **Moses delayed coming down from the mountain:** This troubled the people of Israel.

It is true that **Moses delayed**, but God had a wonderful purpose for Moses' delay, and it would soon be over. Yet because the people

couldn't see the reason for the delay they allowed it to stumble them.

- i. Moses was gone for forty days (Exo. 24:18). This probably seemed like a long time to the people, but a short time to Moses. Certainly it was a short time related to the outworking of God's plan for Israel.
- ii. How we handle God's ordained delays is a good measure of our spiritual maturity. If we allow such delays to make us drift off into sin or lapse into resignation to fate, then we react poorly to His ordained delays. If we allow such times to deepen our perseverance in following God, then they are of good use.

b. The people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him: This sinful impulse came first from the people, not Aaron. The episode of sin described in this chapter happened because they people wanted it. This is an example of where it is not good to rule by democracy and to give the people what they want.

- i. When it comes to ministry, it can be so dangerous to start with what people *want* or what they *feel* they need.

c. Come, make us gods that shall go before us: They wanted gods to go **before** them, undoubtedly to the Promised Land. They knew the LORD led them out of Egypt and they knew the LORD God had revealed Himself at Mount Sinai. Yet, they were willing to trust a god they could make to finish what the LORD began.

- i. Paul dealt with the same error with the Galatians: *Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you know being made perfect by the flesh?* (Gal. 3:3) It is

possible to begin the Christian life trusting Jesus, and then to begin to trust self or one's own spirituality. Following our own gods is no

better for us than it was for ancient Israel.

d. **We do not know what has become of**

him: *Not knowing* led Israel into sin. Instead of leaving this uncomfortable uncertainty with God, Israel turned to the flesh.

2. (2-4) Aaron responds to the peoples' request.

And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me." So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

a. **Break off the golden earrings . . . and bring them to me:** God gave Moses

instructions for taking a free-will offering to be used in making a holy place for God (Exo. 25:1-7). Here Aaron received a collection, an offering of gold to make an idol.

i. The people were generous in response -

all the people broke off the golden earrings . . . and brought them to

Aaron. By nature, people are generous in what they give to their idols. We should be even *more* generous with what we give to the Living God.

b. **He fashioned it with an engraving tool:** This wasn't the Spirit-inspired craftsmanship of Bezaleel and Aholiab. It was the flesh-inspired work of Aaron. He thought it out, melted the gold, molded it, and fashioned it carefully with an engraving tool.

c. **Then they said, "This is your god"** : Aaron did not anoint this thing as their god. He simply went along with the

people as they proclaimed it as their god. He was probably flattered at their admiration of his creation.

i. True leadership would have cried out, "This is idolatry! We must destroy this golden calf. You people are wrong in calling this creation of man your god!" But Aaron wasn't a true leader. He is an example of the one who leads by following popular opinion.

d. **That brought you out of the land of Egypt:** This shows the foolishness of idolatry.

This statue of a calf did not exist the day before, and now they worship it as the god that brought them out of Egypt.

3. (5-6) Ungodly and immoral worship at the golden calf.

So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it.

And Aaron made a proclamation and said,

"Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD." Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

a. **When Aaron saw it:** Aaron was flattered by the enthusiastic response of the people. When he saw their devotion to this idol, **he built an altar before it**. He began to organize the worship of the idol he just made.

i. It was bad enough to have a golden calf the people praised for their escape from Egypt. This second step of Aaron's was worse. He honored and sanctified the idol with animal sacrifice. He made the calf, and then he made the altar to worship it.

b. **Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD:** This shows that the creation and the worship of the golden calf was not a *conscious* rejection of the LORD. Aaron and the rest of Israel probably thought that they could give honor to the LORD *through* the golden calf.

i. Aaron was not crass enough to say, "Let's do away with the LORD God." He simply updated things, making them more modern. In the mind of Israel Aaron didn't take away the LORD God, he simply added the golden calf.

c. **They rose early the next day:** They served their idol with great energy and personal sacrifice. People usually find a way to rise early for the things that are really important to them.

This shows that Israel was willing to give their time, their sleep, and their money in the service of this idol.

d. **And rose up to play:** This is a tasteful way to speak of gross immorality among the people of Israel. Their worship included eating, drinking (in the sense of drunkenness) and sexual immorality.

i. "The verb translated *play* suggests sex-play in Hebrew . . . and therefore we are probably to understand drunken orgies." (Cole)

ii. Less than two months before this, Israel heard the voice of God Himself thunder from heaven, audibly speaking the Ten Commandments to the nation. That dramatic experience, in and of itself, did not change their hearts. It made many of them want a *less demanding* god.

B. The nature and result of Moses' intercession.

1. (7-8) God tells Moses what is happening at the camp of Israel.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land

of Egypt!"

a. **For your people whom you brought out**

of the land of Egypt: God called Israel **your people**, in the sense that they belonged to Moses, not to God. In this God suggested to Moses that He was disowning Israel.

b. **They have turned aside quickly:** This is almost an understatement. They didn't wait long to go their own fleshly way.

c. **They have made themselves a molded**

calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it: God described to Moses everything that happened, and even quoted the words of the

people in their idolatry. God knew *exactly* what happened. The people ignored God, but He did not ignore them.

2. (9-10) God's amazing offer to Moses.

And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people!

Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them.

And I will make of you a great nation."

a. **I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people:** God spoke as if He had seen enough, and He made a remarkable offer to Moses. If Moses would only agree, God

would **consume** Israel and start over again with Moses (**I will make of you a great nation**).

i. Hypothetically, God could have done this and still fulfilled every promise made to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It would

completely change the place of Moses,

making him the new "Abraham" of God's plan for Israel.

Moses had the opportunity to

be as revered as Abraham was, and honored

by every following generation.

b. **Let Me alone, that My wrath may burn**

hot against them: God did not ask for the opinion or participation of Moses in this matter.

He simply told Moses, " **Let Me alone** so I can do this." The clear impression is that if Moses did *nothing*, the plan would go ahead.

3. (11-13) Moses intercedes for Israel.

Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.'"

a. **Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his**

God: Moses refused to do *nothing*. He did not fatalistically say, "Well, whatever God will do, God will do." He **pleaded with the LORD**, according to what he believed to be God's heart.

i. Moses' prayer was not long but it was strong. "It is not the *length*, but the *strength* of prayer that appeals to heaven." (Meyer) b. **Your people whom You brought out of the land of Egypt:** In his prayer, Moses first gave the people back to God. "LORD, they belong to You, not to me. I don't want to be god over these people, only You can do that."

c. **Your people whom You brought out of the land of Egypt:** Moses then appealed to God on the basis of grace. "LORD, we didn't deserve to be brought out

of Egypt to begin with. You did it by Your grace, not because we deserved it. Please don't stop dealing with us by grace."

d. **Why should the Egyptians speak:** Moses then appealed to God on the basis of glory.

"LORD, this will bring discredit to You in the eyes of the nations. The Egyptians will think of You as a cruel God who led your people out to the desert to kill them. Don't let anyone think that of You, God!"

e. **Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by**

Your own self: Finally, Moses appealed to God on the basis of His goodness. "LORD, keep Your promises. You are a good God who is always faithful. Don't break Your promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel."

4. (14) God relents from His anger.

So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

a. **So the LORD relented:** God answered Moses' prayer. God was going to destroy the nation - all Moses had to do was leave God alone and let Him do it. But Moses did not leave God alone; he labored in intercession according to what He knew of the heart of God.

b. **So the LORD relented:** In the King James Version this phrase is translated *the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people*. Based on this, some believe God sometimes needs to repent of evil, or that God changes His mind.

i. It is helpful to read other translations of this passage.

- *Then the Lord relented* (NIV)
- *So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people* (NASB)
- *The Lord turned from the evil which He had thought to do* (Amplified)
- *The Lord was moved with compassion*

to save His people. (Septuagint Bible) ii. Num. 23:19 says, *God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do?* Some say that these two passages contradict each other, and that Exodus 32

shows God repenting and changing while Numbers 23 says God never changes or repents. We can understand these passages by understanding that Moses wrote with what we call *anthropomorphic*, or "man-centered" language. He described the actions of God as they appeared to him. Moses' prayer did not change God, but it did change the standing of the people in God's sight - the people were now in a place of mercy, when before they were in a place of judgment.

iii. Also, we can say that God *did not* go back on His word to either Moses or Israel.

We understand the principle that God's promises of judgment are inherently meant to call men to repentance and prayer and therefore avert the judgment (Eze. 33:13-16).

iv. Some are frustrated because the Bible describes God's actions in human terms, but they really cannot be described in any other way. "I suppose that I need not say that this verse speaks after the manner of men. I do not know after what other manner we can speak. To speak of God after the manner of God, is reserved for God himself; and mortal men could not comprehend such speech. In this sense, the LORD often speaks, not according to the literal fact, but according to the appearance of things to us, in order that

we may understand so far as the human can comprehend the divine." (Spurgeon)

c. The LORD relented from the harm which

He said He would do: God did not destroy Israel, and He *knew* that He would not destroy Israel. Yet He deliberately put Moses into this crucial place of intercession, so that Moses would display and develop God's heart for the people, a heart of love and compassion. Moses prayed just as God wanted him to - as if heaven and earth, salvation or destruction, depended on his prayer. This is how God waits for us to pray.

i. "We are not to think of Moses as altering God's purpose towards Israel by this prayer, but as carrying it out: Moses was never more like God than in such moments, for he shared God's mind and loving purpose." (Cole)

i. Living under the New Covenant, we do not have *less* privilege in prayer than Moses had.

We do not have *less* access to God than Moses had. The only thing we may have *less* of is Moses' heart for the people.

C. Moses confronts Aaron.

1. (15-18) Moses and Joshua hear the people in the camp. And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in his hand. The tablets *were* written on both sides; on the one *side* and on the other they were written. Now the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God engraved on the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "*There is* a noise of war in the camp."

But he said: "*It is* not the noise of the shout of victory, nor the noise of the cry of defeat, *but* the sound of singing I hear."

a. Moses turned and went down from the

mountain: In the midst of this great idolatry, Moses and Joshua came down from their extended time up on Mount Sinai. He carried

the two tablets of the Testimony, written direction by the hand of God.

b. The tablets were the work of God, and

the writing was the writing of God: It is significant that the tablets were written by God's direct hand. All law and morality must come from God's standard and character, or be up to the opinion or whims of man.

i. "For as he is the sole author of *law* and *justice*, so he alone can write them on the heart of man." (Clarke) c. **There is a**

noise of war in the camp: We might say that Joshua was correct when he said this. However, the noise reflected a spiritual war, not a material war.

2. (19-21) Moses puts an end to the disgrace and confronts Aaron.

So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf *and* the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. Then he took the calf which they had made, burned *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder; and he scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it*. And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?"

a. Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke

them: Israel broke the covenant by their idolatry and immorality with the golden calf.

There was something appropriate about Moses breaking the stone tablets of the covenant at Israel's breaking of the covenant.

i. Moses had to deal with **anger** through much of his life. In anger he killed an Egyptian (Exo. 2:11-12). In anger he broke

the tablets written by the finger of God. In anger he beat the rock God commanded him to speak to (Num. 20:10-11). This last display of anger kept Moses out of the Promised Land.

b. **Made the children of Israel drink it:** Moses ground up the calf and made the people drink it for three reasons.

- To show that this "god" was nothing and could be destroyed easily
- To completely obliterate this idol
- To make the people pay an immediate consequence of their sin

c. **What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?**

This was an extremely perceptive question.

Moses understood that this plan didn't originate with Aaron, but that he allowed it and implemented it.

3. (22-24) Aaron's excuse.

So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they *are set* on evil. For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break *it* off.' So they gave *it* to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."

a. **Do not let the anger of my lord become**

hot: Aaron essentially said, "Moses, settle down! It's not so bad as all that!" Aaron had no sense of the greatness of his sin. He had no significant sense of the fear of the LORD.

b. **You know the people, that they are set on evil:** Moses knew this as well as Aaron did.

But Moses had a sense of his need to restrain the evil of the people, and Aaron did not have this.

c. **Make us gods that shall go before us:** Aaron quoted the people exactly. But when he described his own actions (I

cast it into the fire, and this calf came out) he lied.

i. Aaron no doubt meant that this calf was produced by a miracle - it just happened. But Moses - and everyone else - could see the human engraving marks on it (Exo. 32:4). Aaron claimed this was a miraculous work, but the evidence of his workmanship were all over it.

ii. Aaron gave the classic "it just happened" excuse. But it *didn't* just happen. Aaron thought it out, melted the gold, molded it, and fashioned it carefully with an engraving tool (Exo. 32:4).

iii. Aaron did this evil thing and made his excuse because at that moment, it seemed harder to stand for the LORD than to go along with the people, and Aaron took the path of least resistance. He was lazy. "Lazy people always find fault with their tools, and those who do not intend to work always find some excuse or other; and then they make up for their laziness by having a delicious spiritual dream. Have the nominally Christian people about us are dreaming; and they consider that thus they are doing the work of the LORD. They are only doing it deceitfully by putting dreaming into the place of real service." (Spurgeon)

iv. Aaron's sin was so great that only the intercession of Moses saved his life. *And the LORD was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.* (Deu. 9:20)

D. The call to side with either God or idolatry.

1. (25-26) Moses issues a challenge.

Now when Moses saw that the people *were*

unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies), then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever *is* on the Lord's side; *come* to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

a. **The people were unrestrained:** This shows how great the problem was. There is no greater danger than for people to cast off all restraint and do whatever seems right in their own eyes; the darkest days of Israel's national history were characterized by the phrase, *everyone did what was right in his own eyes*. (Jdg. 17:6)

i. In our modern culture we regard the absence of restraint as heaven on earth. But the Bible and common sense tell us that this kind of moral, spiritual, and social anarchy brings nothing but destruction.

ii. *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.* (Pro. 14:12) When man follows his own instincts, his own inclinations, it leads to ruin. We need to follow God's way, not our own.

iii. God has given many restraints to us: the curbs of the fear of God, of family, of culture, of conscience, of law, even of necessity. But these restraints can be - and are being - broken down.

b. **Whoever is on the Lord's side; come to**

me: Moses gave the people of Israel the opportunity to make a stand for the Lord. The Levites, to their honor, sided with the LORD and with Moses. Sadly, they were the only significant group to come out and out for God's cause at the golden calf incident.

2. (27-29) The execution of 3,000.

And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every

man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'" So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother."

a. Let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor: In this case, siding with the LORD meant siding against some people. Those who were more interested in siding with all people could never do what these Levites did.

b. About three thousand men of the people fell that day: It seems that the sin of Israel at the golden calf involved more than these 3,000 people. Yet these were undoubtedly those most flagrant in their idolatry and immorality, or these were the leaders of the sinful conduct.

E. Moses' second intercession.

1. (30) Moses returns to intercede for the people.

Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

a. Now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin: Moses already interceded for the people in Exo. 32:11-14. But he prayed again for them because now he saw the sin with his own eyes, and was struck with the depths of the people's sin.

b. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin: Moses also learned on Mount Sinai that God's penalty for idolatry was death. *He who sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.* (Exo. 22:20)

He was more aware than ever of the distance between the people and God, and sensed the urgency to intercede.

2. (31-32) Moses' bold request on behalf of the people.

Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin; but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

a. **Oh, these people have committed a**

great sin: Moses did not minimize the sin of the people or put it in soft terms. They were guilty of worshipping a **god of gold**.

i. People still worship gods of gold. In August of 1990 a man staggered to the steps of his Los Angeles office. Before he died of the gunshot wound to his chest, he called out the names of his three children. But he still had his \$10,000 Rolex watch clutched in his hand. He gave his life for a god of gold.

b. **Yet now, if You will forgive their sin:** Moses knew the enormity of the people's sin, yet he still asked for forgiveness. This was an appeal to the mercy and grace of God.

c. **If not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written:** Moses asked God to forgive Israel on the basis of his own sacrificial identification with the sinful people. If God would not forgive, Moses asked to be *damned* in sacrificial identification with his sinful people.

i. Of course, this sacrificial heart was the same heart Jesus had in dying for our sins (1Pe. 3:18 and 2Co. 5:21). The Apostle Paul also had some of this same heart of Jesus (Rom. 9:3).

3. (33-35) The LORD's response to the plea of Moses.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit

punishment upon them for their sin." So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

a. **Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book:** God agreed to

spare the nation as a whole, but He definitely reserved the right to judge individual sinners.

b. **Now therefore, go, lead the people to**

the place of which I have spoken to you: This was God's promise to stay faithful to Israel and to keep His presence with them (**My Angel shall go before you**).

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** So Aaron said to them, "Break off the gold earrings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." **3** So all the people broke off the gold earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. **4** He accepted the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." **5** When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow will be a feast to the LORD." **6** So they got up early on the next day and offered up burnt offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.

7 The LORD spoke to Moses: "Go quickly, descend, because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have acted corruptly. **8** They have quickly turned aside from

the way that I commanded them – they have made for themselves a molten calf and have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt.’”

9 Then the LORD said to Moses: “I have seen this people. Look what a stiff-necked people they are! **10** So now, leave me alone so that my anger can burn against them and I can destroy them, and I will make from you a great nation.”

11 But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your anger burn against your people, whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? **12** Why should the Egyptians say, ‘For evil he led them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger, and relent of this evil against your people. **13** Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel your servants, to whom you swore by yourself and told them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken about I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.’” **14** Then the LORD relented over the evil that he had said he would do to his people.

15 Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. The tablets were written on both sides – they were written on the front and on the back. **16** Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. **17** When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “It is the sound of war in the camp!” **18** Moses said, “It is not the sound of those who shout for victory, nor is it the sound of those who cry because they are overcome, but the sound of singing I hear.”

19 When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became extremely angry. He threw the tablets from his hands and broke them to pieces at the bottom of the mountain. **20** He took the calf they had made

and burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, poured it out on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.

21 Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought on them so great a sin?" **22** Aaron said, "Do not let your anger burn hot, my lord; you know these people, that they tend to evil. **23** They said to me, 'Make us gods that will go before us, for as for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' **24** So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out."

25 Moses saw that the people were running wild, for Aaron had let them get completely out of control, causing derision from their enemies. **26** So Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." All the Levites gathered around him, **27** and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Each man fasten his sword on his side, and go back and forth from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and each one kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.'"

28 The Levites did what Moses ordered, and that day about three thousand men of the people died. **29** Moses said, "You have been consecrated today for the LORD, for each of you was against his son or against his brother, so he has given a blessing to you today."

30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a very serious sin, but now I will go up to the LORD - perhaps I can make atonement on behalf of your sin."

31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has committed a very serious sin, and they have made for themselves gods of gold. **32** But now, if you will forgive their sin..., but if not, wipe me out from your book that you have written." **33** The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me - that person I will wipe out of my book. **34** So now go, lead the people to the place I

have spoken to you about. See, my angel will go before you. But on the day that I punish, I will indeed punish them for their sin."

35 And the LORD sent a plague on the people because they had made the calf – the one Aaron made.

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Go up from here, you and the people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.'"

Guzik - Exodus 33:1-23

Exodus 33 - Israel's Path of Restored Fellowship

A. Israel's repentance and restoration.

1. (1-3) The people learn of God's heart towards their sin.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' And I will send *My* Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you *are* a stiff-necked people."

a. **To your descendants I will give it:** After the sin of the golden calf, God did not deny the children of Israel the Promised Land. He did not deny them His protection, because He promised His might on their behalf.

b. **I will not go up in your midst:** God did say He would deny Israel His *presence*.

Essentially, God said, "I won't stay so close to you, because I might wipe you out - but go your way."

i. This was a challenge to Moses and the nation as a whole. God told them they could have the Promised Land, but He would not remain with them in a close, personal way.

If they were satisfied with that arrangement, it would prove they only loved God's blessings and not God Himself. If they challenged God - pleading with Him for His presence, not only His blessings - it would show a genuine heart for God Himself. This was the first step towards revival in Israel.

ii. "To be given every other blessing is of no value if God is not with you. What is the value of Canaan? What is the value of milk and honey? What is the value of having possessions, if God was not with them? They saw that the realization of the presence of God, having this fellowship and company, was infinitely more important than everything else." (Lloyd-Jones)

2. (4-6) The people repent and mourn.

And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You *are* a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your

ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'"

So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

a. **They mourned, and no one put on his**

ornaments: This was a good response on behalf of Israel. They mourned the potential loss of God's close presence. They cared about their relationship with the LORD, not only what He could give them.

i. This was a significant issue for Israel, because they could see the presence of the LORD in the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. If God withdrew His presence it could be clearly seen.

b. **So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount**

Horeb: The people displayed their repentance and mourning by not wearing their **ornaments**.

They knew this was no time for decorating the flesh, but for bringing the heart right with God.

This was the second step towards revival among Israel.

i. "The people who are concerned about revival, in a true sense, are not just out for a little bit of excitement, or interest, or some happiness, or phenomena, or coming with an attitude of 'something marvelous is going to happen and we are going to have a great good time.' That is now how they think about it at all. And if you, my dear friends, are simply thinking about meetings, and excitement, and something wonderful, you

have not begun to understand this matter." (Lloyd-Jones)

3. (7-11) Moses leads the nation in worship.

Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the

tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that* everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp. So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, when Moses entered the

tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the Lord* talked with Moses. All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door. So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

a. **Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting:**

After Israel's heart was turned towards God and after they humbled themselves by removing their ornaments, Moses took the next step towards

revival and restored relationship. *He* initiated a determined effort to seek God, making his own tent a **tabernacle of meeting**.

i. God told Moses to make a tabernacle of meeting when Moses was on Mount Sinai (Exodus 25-28). But the tabernacle wasn't built yet. This wouldn't stop Moses from taking extraordinary measures to seek God. He determined to make his own tent a

tabernacle of meeting.

ii. This was not something that Moses organized or planned or strategized. He sought God, radically and spontaneously. When Moses did that, God touched the hearts of the people.

b. Everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which

was outside the camp: By making the place of worship outside the camp, Moses clearly drew a line to see who really wanted to draw close to the LORD.

i. "When the Holy Spirit of God begins to deal with any one of us, there will be this separation. It will not be paraded, it will not be the Pharisees' 'I am holier than thou' attitude. No, once a man begins to be burdened for the glory of God and the state of the Church, he immediately feels the call to consecration, he 'goes out' as it were." (Lloyd-Jones)

c. Whenever Moses went out to the

tabernacle, that all the people rose: The people watched and noticed when Moses worshipped. When Moses worshipped, they also worshipped. Moses prompted the people to draw close to God by his own example.

d. The LORD spoke to Moses face to face,

as a man speaks to his friend: The phrase **face to face** is a figurative expression, meaning free and open fellowship. Moses had not - and could not - see the actual face of God the Father in His glory.

i. This is the sense in which John says *No one has seen God at any time* (1Jo. 4:12).

Yet one can spiritually have a **face to face** relationship with God, in the sense of a free and open relationship with God.

e. **Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle:** The personal revival in the life of Moses was an example to the entire nation, but it was a special example to his servant Joshua. When Moses drew close to God it also drew Joshua close to God, so much so that Joshua **did not depart from the tabernacle.**

4. (12-17) Moses prays for the people.

Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have

also found grace in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people." And He said, "My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth." So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

a. **But You have not let me know whom**

You will send with me: For Moses, it wasn't enough to know that he and Israel would make it to the Promised Land. In his estimation, the Promised Land was nothing special without the special presence of the LORD. God previously promised to send an angel with Israel (Exo.

33:2). Moses presses God on this point, wanting to know *exactly* whom God will send.

i. This was bold - almost importunate - drawing near to God. Moses was determined to have God's presence with Israel as close as possible. This was the next step towards revival and restoration of Israel's relationship with God.

b. **My Presence will go with you:** Here God seems to answer Moses' prayer, but Moses does not rest. He continues to press God for

affirmation of the promise. This shows how boldly Moses sought after God for the sake of his own relationship with God and for the benefit of the nation.

i. **My Presence will go with you** is literally "My Face will go with you." This helps us to understand what it means when it says

Moses met with God *face to face* (Exo. 32:11). It has the sense of "in the immediate presence of God."

c. **For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?** Moses knew that nothing the LORD could *give* them would truly separate them from the nations. Only the strong presence of the LORD Himself could do that.

i. " 'Now,' said Moses to God, 'I am asking for this something extra, because I am concerned. Here we are thy people. How are all the other nations to know that we really are your people? They are looking on at us, they are laughing at us, mocking us and jeering at us, they are ready to overwhelm us. Now, I am asking for something,' said Moses, 'that will make it absolutely clear that we are not just one of the nations of the

world, but that we are thy people, that we are separate, unique, altogether apart.'

" (Lloyd-Jones)

d. For you have found grace in My sight,

and I know you by name: God honored the bold intercession of Moses, and He promised to restore His relationship with Israel.

B. Moses asks to draw closer to God.

1. (18) Moses' desire to draw closer.

And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

a. Please, show me Your glory: Moses won a

"yes" answer from God when he asked for the special presence of God to remain with Israel on the way to the Promised Land (Exo. 33:12-17).

He also won a confirmation of the promise from God and an affirmation of close relationship. Yet he was still not satisfied. He wanted *more* in his personal relationship with God.

i. This hunger for more of God - for more of an *experience* with God - is a mark of true revival and restoration of relationship.

Whatever Moses had experienced with God, he now wanted more.

i. "We may have been Christians for many years, but have we ever really longed for some person, direct knowledge and experience of God? Oh, I know, we pray for causes, we pray for the Church, we pray for missionaries, we pray for our own efforts that we organize, yes, but that is not what I am concerned about. We all ask for personal blessings, but how much do we know of this desire for God himself? That is what Moses asked for: 'Show me thy glory. Take me yet a step nearer.' " (Lloyd-Jones)

b. Show me Your glory: This was an interesting request. Moses already saw

something of the glory of God (Exo. 16:10 and 24:16-17), yet he wanted more. He sensed that he had not seen anything yet.

i. "In other words, by revival we do not mean the Church being blessed by God, and conscious of his presence, and enabled to do his work. Moses, in a sense, was already conscious of all that . . . But Moses was not satisfied. And revival, I repeat, is not the Church being blessed and being conscious of God's presence, and being enabled to do her work. Revival goes beyond all that." (Lloyd-Jones)

2. (19-20) God tells Moses what He will show him.

Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

a. **I will make all My goodness pass before**

you: Moses asked to see the glory of God (Exo.

33:18), and God promised to show Moses His

goodness. God's glory lies in His **goodness.**

When Moses saw the glory of God, His first understanding was that God was good. If we don't know that God is good, we don't know much about Him at all.

i. Often we come to the place where we are always trying to "balance" God out. We suppose there is something like a Yin and

Yang to the universe, in the sense of light and dark, good and evil, law and grace. But God Himself is "unbalanced" in this sense.

He is entirely good.

b. **I will proclaim the name of the LORD**

before you: In the thinking of the ancient Hebrews (and also in other ancient cultures), the **name** represented a

person's character and nature. God promised to reveal His character to Moses, not merely a title.

i. Lloyd-Jones gives the idea of what God said to Moses: "I will stoop to your weakness. I will let you see something. But, much more important than that, I will cause all my goodness to pass before you. I will give you a deeper insight and understanding into myself, into my character, into what I am. That is what you really need to know."

c. **You cannot see My face; for no man**

shall see Me, and live: God would not - and could not - literally show Moses His face. This helps us to understand what was meant in Exo.

33:11 when it said, *the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.*

3. (21-23) How God will protect Moses when God passes before Moses.

And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

a. **Here is a place by Me, and you shall**

stand on the rock: God was about to reveal Himself to Moses in a unique way. God prepared the event carefully, giving Moses a specific place to stand.

b. **While My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock:** God's glory could not *remain* in front of Moses, it had to pass by him. Even with that, Moses had to be protected by the **hand** of God and **the cleft of the rock** when the glory of God passed before him.

i. This is a vivid and endearing image: protected both by the **hand** of God and hidden away in the **rock** of refuge He provides. The shelter in the **cleft of the**

rock gave the image for Augustus Toplady in his famous hymn *Rock of Ages: Rock of Ages, cleft for me; Let me hide myself in Thee.*

ii. Protected by God, Moses could endure the glory of God passing before him. Isaiah had a glimpse of the glory of God, and it moved him to mourn his own sin and unworthiness (Isaiah 6). John experienced some of the glory of God and fell at the feet of Jesus like a dead man (Rev. 1:17). Paul experienced the glory of God on the Damascus Road, but also in the experience described in 2 Corinthians 12. It was such an amazing experience that he could only barely describe it.

iii. Others, beyond the times of the Bible, have also experienced glimpses of this glory. "Have you ever read of Jonathan Edwards describing his experience of it in a forest while he was there kneeling in prayer for about an hour? Have you read of David Brainerd, the great apostle to the American Indians, experiencing the glory of God, and literally sweating, though it was cold, and though it was freezing round and about him? What was causing the sweating? Oh, it was the glory, the character and the transcendence of the glory. And to give you a man who is much nearer to ourselves, D. L. Moody, a very strong man physically, a very sturdy man. And yet when God gave him a glimpse of his glory, he had to ask him to desist and to hold back his hand, because he felt it was killing him. He is not the only one who has felt that." (Lloyd-Jones)

iv. We also should have an earnest desire to

experience God deeply. Paul made it clear that we cannot fully see the glory of God - we see it as in a piece of polished metal, dimly (1Co. 13:12) - *but we can see something of it*. Paul didn't say we see *nothing* of the glory of God, only that we can't fully see it or comprehend it.

c. I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be

seen: Moses could only see God's **back** (a unique term never used for anatomy). The idea is that Moses could only see behind God, not God Himself.

i. "The word . . . could just as well and more accurately be rendered 'the after-effects' of his radiant glory, which had just passed by." (Kaiser)

ii. Poole puts it like this: "Thou shalt see a shadow or obscure delineation of my glory, as much as thou canst bear, though not as much as thou dost desire."

iii. "These four things are happening at the same time, whenever God draws near to his people - revealing and concealing, blessing and protecting, all happening together at one and the same time. You cannot separate these things." (Lloyd-Jones)

iv. With these special protections, God rewarded the desire of Moses to see His glory as much as humanly possible. This demonstrates that God rewards the seeking heart. And as marvelous as this experience was for Moses, it still cannot compare to the revelation of God given to us in Jesus Christ.

· *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the*

*Father, full of grace and truth. (Joh.
1:14)*

*· But we all, with unveiled face,
beholding as in a mirror the glory of the
Lord, are being transformed into the
same image from glory to glory, just as
by the Spirit of the Lord. (2Co. 3:18)*

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without permission* **2** I will send an angel before you, and I
will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the
Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. **3** Go up to a land
flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go up among you,
for you are a stiff-necked people, and I might destroy you on
the way.”

4 When the people heard this troubling word they mourned;
no one put on his ornaments. **5** For the LORD
had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked
people. If I went up among you for a moment, I might
destroy you. Now take off your ornaments, that I may know
what I should do to you.’” **6** So the Israelites stripped off
their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

7 Moses took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, at a
good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of
meeting. Anyone seeking the LORD would go out to the tent
of meeting that was outside the camp.

8 And when Moses went out to the tent, all the people would
get up and stand at the entrance to their tents and watch
Moses until he entered the tent. **9** And whenever Moses
entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and
stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak
with Moses. **10** When all the people would see the pillar of
cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people,
each one at the entrance of his own tent, would rise and
worship. **11** The LORD would speak to Moses face to face,
the way a person speaks to a friend. Then Moses would

return to the camp, but his servant, Joshua son of Nun, a young man, did not leave the tent.

12 Moses said to the LORD, "See, you have been saying to me, 'Bring this people up,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. But you said, 'I know you by name, and also you have found favor in my sight.'

13 Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your way, that I may know you, that I may continue to find favor in your sight. And see that this nation is your people."

14 And the LORD said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

15 And Moses said to him, "If your presence does not go with us, do not take us up from here. **16** For how will it be known then that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us, so that we will be distinguished, I and your people, from all the people who are on the face of the earth?"

17 The LORD said to Moses, "I will do this thing also that you have requested, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

18 And Moses said, "Show me your glory."

19 And the LORD said, "I will make all my goodness pass before your face, and I will proclaim the LORD by name before you; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."

20 But he added, "You cannot see my face, for no one can see me and live." **21** The LORD said, "Here is a place by me; you will station yourself on a rock. **22** When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and will cover you with my hand while I pass by. **23** Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen."

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Cut out two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you smashed.

Guzik - Exodus 34:1-35

Exodus 34 - The Covenant Renewed

A. Moses meets with God again on the mountain.

1. (1-4) God calls Moses up Mount Sinai again.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*, and I will write on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the

mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain." So he cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD

had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

a. **Cut two tablets of stone like the first**

ones: Moses broke the first set of tablets of stone, the ones written with the finger of God (Exo. 32:19). He broke them because Israel broke the covenant.

b. **I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you**

broke: Now that Israel's heart was in a place to restore the covenant, God provided a new set of tablets of stone - and Moses brought them up on the mountain for God to write them.

c. **No man shall come up with you:** Moses here again acted as a mediator between God and the people. The people couldn't deal with God directly because of their own sin and rebellion, so Moses bridged the gap between the people and God.

2. (5-7) The revelation of God to Moses.

Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and

proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

a. Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there: The cloud

mentioned was no doubt the cloud of Shekinah glory. This was the same cloud that:

- Covered Mount Sinai (Exo. 19:16)
- Went with Israel by day (Exo. 13:21-22)
- Went to the tent of Moses (Exo. 33:9-10)
- Filled the temple with glory (2Ch. 7:2)
- Overshadowed Mary at the conception of Jesus (Luk. 1:35)
- Was present at the transfiguration of Jesus (Luk. 9:34-35)
- Will be present at the return of Jesus (Rev. 1:7)

b. Proclaimed the name of the LORD: This means that God revealed His character to Moses. The specific aspects of His character are mentioned in this passage, yet this was far more than a lecture on the nature of God.

Moses *experienced* the character of God in a dramatic way.

c. And the LORD passed before him: As Moses did what God told him to do in Exo. 33:21-23, he experienced what God said he would. Hidden in the cleft of the rock, Moses saw "behind" the LORD - as much of God's glory as he could possibly take in.

d. The LORD, the LORD God: This is the "same old name" for God that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew; this is no "new" revelation of God. This is the eternal,

immutable God.

i. "The *name* of YHWH expresses all that He is and does, so this means proclamation of the saving acts of God . . . Here is God is

Self-revelation, proclaiming His very self to Moses." (Cole)

ii. Knowing God should be the active interest of every human being, and especially of every Christian. "It has been said by someone that 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father." (Spurgeon)

e. **Merciful and gracious:** **Merciful** is better translated, "full of compassion." In five of the 13 times it is used, this word is translated *full of compassion* in the NKJV. This is the first place in the Bible where this Hebrew word *rachuwm* is used.

i. The word was also used regarding Israel and the Exodus in Psa. 78:38: *But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath.* This is compassion in action.

ii. The word translated **gracious** comes from the idea "to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior; to favor, or to bestow." It is grace, giving to the undeserving.

iii. F.B. Meyer on this word **gracious**: "That word has gone out of fashion. Our fathers petrified it; they made it the foundation-

stone of a structure of granite, in which the souls of men could find no rest, and therefore we rather dread that word - Grace. And yet there is no greater word in the language than the word that stands for the undeserved, free gift of the Love of God."

f. Longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth: The idea behind the word **longsuffering** means that God is slow to anger. He doesn't have a short fuse and is patient with us.

i. We all know what it is like to deal with people who have a short fuse - the slightest offense, the slightest perceived wrong, and they are up in arms about it. God isn't like that. He is **longsuffering**.

ii. "Not merely adequate, but abounding is this great God of glory. He has barns and silos full of love and faithfulness; he is stacking it in the streets looking for a distribution system." (Erwin)

g. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin: God's goodness is shown concretely towards us in His forgiving character.

i. **Iniquity and transgression and sin** are all mentioned so no one would think there was some type of sin God was unable to forgive.

ii. This revelation of the character of God to Moses forever puts away the idea there is a "bad" God of the Old Testament, and a "good" God of the New Testament. God's character of love and mercy and grace is just as present in the Old Testament as in the New Testament.

iii. Psa. 86:15 repeats this exact same revelation of God: *But You, O LORD, are a*

*God full of compassion, and gracious,
longsuffering and abundant in mercy and
truth.*

h. **By no means clearing the guilty:** If His love and forgiveness are rejected, God will punish, and that punishment will have repercussions through the generations that hate Him (Exo. 20:5).

i. His loving, gracious, and giving character do not "cancel out" His righteousness.

Because of the work of Jesus, the righteousness of God is satisfied and the grace and mercy of God are righteously given.

3. (8-9) Moses reacts to the revelation of God.

So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

a. **So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped:** His first, and primary reaction was simply worship.

When we come to know who God is and all His great love for us, the most practical thing it makes us do is worship Him more than ever.

i. Indeed, Moses **made haste** to worship.

He was compelled to worship God when he saw so clearly whom God was. When we don't have a compelling drive to worship God, it's clear evidence we don't really appreciate who He is.

b. **If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us:** Moses asked for the

goodness, grace, and mercy of God be extended to himself and the nation.

i. When we see the goodness of God for what it is, we should not hesitate to ask that it be extended to us. If we know God is

good, we should ask Him to be good to us.

If we know He is forgiving, we should ask Him to forgive us. The knowledge of God is therefore not a passive exercise. When we know Him, it leads us to receive from Him.

ii. But Moses went even a step further than this, going beyond only asking these things for himself. He also asked for them on behalf of the nation also.

B. Renewal of the covenant.

1. (10-11) What God will do for Israel.

And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD. For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you. Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and

the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

a. **I will make a covenant:** This was *God's* covenant, that Israel was invited to join. He did not negotiate the terms with Israel. Instead He dictated the terms to Israel.

b. **I will do marvels . . . all the people among whom you are shall see the work**

of the LORD: God's plan was to glorify Himself to all the nations through Israel, and to do this through the great things He did among them.

i. Israel had a choice regarding those great things. Either the great things would be blessings so great that every nation would

know that God alone had blessed Israel (as was the case with Solomon). Or, the great things would be curses so great that every nation would know God had chastised Israel and yet kept them a nation (as was the case with the exile). Either way, God would glorify Himself through Israel among the nations.

c. **I am driving out:** God promised to do what Israel could not do by itself - drive out the nations of Canaan, allowing Israel to take

possession of what God gave to them.

2. (12-16) Israel must be separate from the Canaanites in worship, politics, fellowship and marriage.

"Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their *wooden* images (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and

make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

a. **You shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images:** The culture of the

Canaanites was so corrupt that it was beyond redemption. God did not want Israel to assume any of the sinful practices found in the culture of the Canaanites.

b. **And they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods:** There was a definite connection between the worship of the Canaanite gods and sexual

immorality. Many of the Canaanite gods were fertility gods and

they were worshipped with ritual prostitutes and sex.

3. (17) Israel must renounce idolatry.

"You shall make no molded gods for yourselves.

a. **No molded gods:** This command was especially poignant in light of the golden calf debacle. No molded image could come close to displaying the glory of God, even in the partial sense Moses saw it on Mount Sinai.

4. (18) Israel must keep the feast of Unleavened Bread.

"The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep.

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.

a. **The Feast of Unleavened Bread:** This was a feast speaking of their purity before God, when all leaven - a symbol of sin - was put away and Israel walked in a symbolic purity.

5. (19-28) Various laws, mostly regarding Israel's separation from other nations and separating unto the LORD.

"All that open the womb *are* Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep. But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him*, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. Six

days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land

when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year. You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning. The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD

your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk." Then the LORD said to Moses,

"Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you

and with Israel." So he was there with the LORD

forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

a. Three times in the year all your men

shall appear before the Lord: God

commanded that at three feasts each year

(Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of

Tabernacles), each Israelite man should gather before the LORD. He even promised a

supernatural protection for an obedient Israel (**neither will any man covet your land**

when you go up to appear before the

LORD your God three times in the year).

b. You shall not offer the blood of My

sacrifice with leaven: Leaven (yeast) is often a picture of sin in the Bible. Therefore, it was forbidden to include any kind of leaven in a blood sacrifice.

c. You shall not boil a young goat in its

mother's milk: This command is repeated from Exo. 23:19.

d. So he was there with the LORD forty

days and forty nights; he neither ate

bread nor drank water: This was a

completely unique and supernatural fast. It is definitely possible for someone to live without food for 40 days, but by any account it is a miracle to go without **water** for this long.

This kind of fasting is never repeated or recommended in the Scriptures.

C. The shining face of Moses.

1. (29-30) Moses' face shines when he comes down from Mount Sinai.

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

a. **Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him:** His close communion with God physically affected Moses. His face had a shining appearance that was so noticeable that people were **afraid to come near him**.

2. (31-32) Moses relates the covenant of God to the leaders of Israel.

Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

3. (33-35) The veil on Moses' face.

And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face

shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

a. **He put a veil on his face:** We could easily jump to the assumption that Moses wore the veil so the people would no longer be *afraid to come near him*. It is easy to think that the veil was to protect them from seeing the shining face of Moses. But Paul explained the real

purpose of the veil: not to hide the shining face of Moses, but so that the diminishing glory of his face would not be observed, - because the glory was fading.

i. *Moses, who put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away* (2Co. 3:13).

ii. The Old Covenant had a glory, but it was a fading glory. God didn't want people to see the fading glory of the Old Covenant, and lose confidence in Moses.

iii. The Old Covenant was great and glorious - but it looks pretty pale in comparison to the New Covenant. A bright autumn moon may look beautiful and give great light, but it is nothing to the noon-day sun.

b. **The skin of Moses' face shone:** The Hebrew verb for **shone** literally means, "shot forth beams." It is also related to a noun for "horn." This is why the Latin Vulgate mistranslated this verb as "having horns," and so in most medieval works of art Moses is wearing a pair of horns on his head.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Be prepared in the morning, and go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and station yourself for me there on the top of the mountain. **3** No one is to come up with you; do not let anyone be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks or the herds may graze in front of that mountain." **4** So Moses cut out two tablets of stone like the first; early in the morning he went up to Mount

Sinai, just as the LORD had commanded him, and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone. **5** The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the LORD

by name. **6** The LORD passed by before him and proclaimed: "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, **7** keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children and children's children, to the third and fourth generation."

8 Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshiped **9** and said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for we are a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

10 He said, "See, I am going to make a covenant before all your people. I will do wonders such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. All the people among whom you live will see the work of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am doing with you.

11 "Obey what I am commanding you this day. I am going to drive out before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. **12**

Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it become a snare among you. **13** Rather you must destroy their altars, smash their images, and cut down their Asherah poles. **14**

For you must not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. **15** Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invites you, you will eat from his sacrifice; **16** and you then take his daughters for your sons, and when his daughters prostitute themselves to their gods,

they will make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods as well. **17** You must not make yourselves molten gods.

18 “You must keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you; do this at the appointed time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out of Egypt.

19 “Every firstborn of the womb belongs to me, even every firstborn of your cattle that is a male, whether ox or sheep.

20 Now the firstling of a donkey you may redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then break its neck. You must redeem all the firstborn of your sons.

“No one will appear before me empty-handed.

21 “On six days you may labor, but on the seventh day you must rest; even at the time of plowing and of harvest you are to rest.

22 “You must observe the Feast of Weeks – the firstfruits of the harvest of wheat – and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year. **23** At three times in the year all your men must appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. **24** For I will drive out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one will covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

25 “You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with yeast; the sacrifice from the feast of Passover must not remain until the following morning.

26 “The first of the firstfruits of your soil you must bring to the house of the LORD your God.

You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

27 The LORD said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” **28** So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread, and he did not drink water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

29 Now when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand – when he came

down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. **30**

When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to approach him. **31**

But Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and Moses spoke to them. **32**

After this all the Israelites approached, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai.

33 When Moses finished speaking with them, he would put a veil on his face. **34** But when Moses went in before the

LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out. Then he would come out and tell the Israelites

what he had been commanded. **35** When the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face

shone, Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with the LORD.

1 Moses assembled the whole community of the Israelites and said to them, "These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do.

Guzik - Exodus 35:1-35

Exodus 35 - Offerings For the Tabernacle

A. The call to receive the offering.

1. (1-3) The command to keep the Sabbath.

Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them,

"These *are* the words which the LORD has commanded *you* to do: Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

a. **Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD:** In the coming chapters, there is a lot of work for Israel to do.

They had to build a complex and exact

Tabernacle of meeting. Yet before they do anything, they must enter into God's rest and respect the Sabbath.

i. The same principle holds true for our walk with God. Anything we do for the LORD must grow out of our rest in Him and rest in His finished work on our behalf.

b. Whoever does any work on it shall be

put to death: This was a strict call to obedience. Before they did the work of building the tabernacle, God first called Israel to the work of simple obedience. Basic obedience is a pre-requisite for doing work for the LORD.

2. (4-9) Receiving what is needed to build the tabernacle.

And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded, saying: 'Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

a. This is the thing which the LORD

commanded: Now it was time to do what God originally commanded Moses in Exodus 25-31

regarding the building of the tabernacle and its associated items.

b. Take from among you an offering to the

LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let

him bring it as an offering to the LORD: This offering came from God's command, not from Moses' clever fund-raising techniques. This shows God's normal way of channeling resources to His work.

i. God could cause the money and materials

to just appear by a miracle. Yet He chooses to almost always fund His work through the willing gifts of His people. He works this way because we need to be a giving people.

ii. This idea is echoed in 2Co. 9:7: *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

3. (10-19) Coordinating the labor and planning the work for the tabernacle.

'All *who are* gifted artisans among you shall come and make all that the LORD has commanded: the tabernacle, its tent, its covering, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; the ark and its poles, *with* the mercy seat, and the veil of the covering; the table and its poles, all its utensils, and the showbread; also the lampstand for the light, its utensils, its lamps, and the oil for the light; the incense altar, its poles, the anointing oil, the sweet incense, and the screen for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, all its utensils, *and* the laver and its base; the hangings of the court, its pillars, their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; the pegs of the tabernacle, the pegs of the court, and their cords; the garments of ministry, for ministering in the holy *place*; the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.'

4. (20-29) Receiving the offering for building the tabernacle. And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. Then

everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, *and* they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing heart, *and* brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that is, every man who *made* an offering of gold to the LORD. And every man, with whom was found

blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*, red skins of rams, and badger skins, brought *them*.

Everyone who offered an offering of silver or bronze brought the Lord's offering. And everyone with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought *it*. All the women *who were* gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands, and brought what they had spun, of blue , purple, *and* scarlet, and fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred with wisdom spun yarn of goats' *hair*. The rulers brought onyx stones, and the stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate, and spices and oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.

The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring *material* for all kinds of work which the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.

a. All the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of

Moses: Moses wasn't into "high-pressure"

giving where people were asked to make quick, public decisions about giving, or asked to make an immediate pledge. There was no manipulation at all in Moses' request.

i. Moses didn't have a contests pitting one tribe against another, to see which tribe could raise the most money, or any other such nonsense. God did the work in the hearts of the people.

b. Everyone came whose heart was stirred

. . . everyone whose spirit was willing . . .

as many as had a willing heart . . . all the women whose hearts were stirred . . . a freewill offering to the LORD . . . whose

hearts were willing: The idea of the freedom and lack of coercion in the offering is repeated and emphasized.

i. Though their hearts were willing, they didn't know what to give, when to give, or how to give until Moses led them. Willing hearts still need to be told when there is a need and how they can meet that need.

c. The LORD's offering . . . an offering of gold to the LORD . . . the LORD's offering . . . a freewill offering to the

LORD: It is also clear exactly Whom they were giving to - the LORD, not Moses or even the nation.

d. Both men and women . . . every man . . . every man with whom was found blue and purple and scarlet . . . everyone with whom was found acacia wood . . . all the women who were gifted artisans . . . all the women whose hearts stirred with wisdom . . . the rulers brought onyx

stones: In this we see just how many among Israel gave to the work. Not just the "rich"

people gave; everyone who could, and who had a willing heart, gave. There were many willing hearts.

i. If you are waiting until you have more money before you have a willing heart to give, you will probably wait forever.

ii. The people gave what they could. Not all could give gold or precious gems, but they could give some goat's hair. Certainly, a gift of goat's hair could be just as precious in God's sight as a gift of gold, if it was given with the right heart.

B. Coordinating the construction of the tabernacle.

1. (30-35) The call of Bezaleel and Aholiab.

And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the

tribe of Judah; and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship. And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, *in* him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with skill to do all

manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine linen, and of the weaver; those who do every work and those who design artistic works.

a. He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship: God chose Bezaleel and

Aholiab to be the "general contractors" for this building project. He equipped them with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to do the work.

b. Those who do every work and those

who design artistic works: The leaders of the work of building the tabernacle had a unique inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do this important and practical work. Since God wanted the work done according to a certain *pattern* (Exo. 25:9), it made sense that He specially inspired some to do the work.

2. (36:1) The coordination of the work.

"And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded."

a. Every gifted artisan . . shall do according to all the LORD has

commanded: It was up to the workers under Bezaleel and Aholiab to follow what the LORD instructed them to do.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** In six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there must be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of complete rest to the LORD. Anyone who does work on it will be put to death. **3** You must not kindle a fire in any of your homes on the Sabbath day.”

4 Moses spoke to the whole community of the Israelites, “This is the word that the LORD has commanded: **5** ‘Take an offering for the LORD. Let everyone who has a willing heart bring an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, **6** blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, fine linen, goat’s hair, **7** ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, **8** olive oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, **9** onyx stones, and other gems for mounting on the ephod and the breastpiece. **10** Every skilled person among you is to come and make all that the LORD has commanded: **11** the tabernacle with its tent, its covering, its clasps, its frames, its crossbars, its posts, and its bases; **12** the ark, with its poles, the atonement lid, and the special curtain that conceals it; **13** the table with its poles and all its vessels, and the Bread of the Presence; **14** the lampstand for the light and its accessories, its lamps, and oil for the light; **15** and the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; the hanging for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; **16** the altar for the burnt offering with its bronze grating that is on it, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin and its pedestal; **17** the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway to the courtyard; **18** tent pegs for the tabernacle and tent pegs for the courtyard and their ropes; **19** the woven garments for serving in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister as priests.”

20 So the whole community of the Israelites went out from the presence of Moses. **21** Everyone whose heart stirred him to action and everyone whose spirit was willing came and

brought the offering for the LORD for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. **22** They came, men and women alike, all who had willing hearts. They brought brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments, all kinds of gold jewelry, and everyone came who waved a wave offering of gold to the LORD.

23 Everyone who had blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, fine linen, goats' hair, ram skins dyed red, or fine leather brought them. **24** Everyone making an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for any work of the service brought it. **25** Every woman who was skilled spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen, **26** and all the women whose heart stirred them to action and who were skilled spun goats' hair.

27 The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted for the ephod and the breastpiece, **28** and spices and olive oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense.

29 The Israelites brought a freewill offering to the LORD, every man and woman whose heart was willing to bring materials for all the work that the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do.

30 Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. **31** He has filled him with the Spirit of God - with skill, with understanding, with knowledge, and in all kinds of work, **32** to design artistic designs, to work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, **33** and in cutting stones for their setting, and in cutting wood, to do work in every artistic craft. **34** And he has put it in his heart to teach, he and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. **35** He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, as designers, as embroiderers in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and in fine linen, and as weavers. They are craftsmen in all the work and artistic designers.

1 So Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom the LORD has put skill and ability to know how to do all the work for the service of the sanctuary are to do the work according to all that the LORD has commanded."

Guzik - Exodus 36:1-38

Exodus 36 - Building the Tent of Meeting

A. The people bring an offering.

1. (2-3) The offering is asked for.

Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work. And they received from

Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning.

a. They continued bringing to him freewill

offerings every morning: Again, even willing hearts need to be told "now is the time to give."

Moses let them know, and the people started bringing their offering to the LORD.

2. (4-7) The people bring more than enough.

Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, and they spoke to Moses, saying,

"The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD

commanded *us* to do." So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be

proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for

the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done; indeed too much.

a. The people bring much more than

enough: This shows how blessed giving can be when free from human manipulation and tricks.

Willing hearts will always give enough as God blesses the work - indeed, **the people were restrained from bringing.**

b. And the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was

sufficient: Moses showed great integrity by not gathering more than the project needed. God told him to take an offering for the building of a tabernacle, and when the tabernacle was

provided for the offering was over.

B. The building and assembling of the curtains, boards, pillars, and veils of the tabernacle.

1. (8-13) The curtains of an artistic design of cherubim (according to the command and description in Exo. 26:1-6).

Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*; with artistic designs of cherubim they made them. The length of each curtain *was* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the curtains *were* all the same size.

And he coupled five curtains to one another, and *the other* five curtains he coupled to one another.

He made loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set; likewise he did on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain on the end of the second set; the loops held one *curtain* to another. And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be one tabernacle.

2. (14-18) The curtains of goat's hair (according to the command and description in Exo. 26:7-13).

He made curtains of goats' *hair* for the tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. The length of each curtain *was* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains *were* the same size. He coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain of the second set. He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, that it might be one.

3. (19) The curtains of ram's skin dyed red and badger skins (according to the command and description in Exo. 26:14).

Then he made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, and a covering of badger skins above *that*.

4. (20-34) The boards and connecting bars for the frame and walls of the tabernacle (according to the command and description in Exo. 26:15-30).

For the tabernacle he made boards of acacia wood, standing upright. The length of each board *was* ten cubits, and the width of each board a cubit and a half. Each board had two tenons for binding one to another. Thus he made for all the boards of the tabernacle. And he made boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. Forty sockets of silver he made to go under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. And for the other side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty boards and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. For the west side of the tabernacle he made six boards. He also made two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. And they were coupled at the bottom and coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus he made both of them for the two corners. So there were eight boards and their sockets; sixteen sockets of silver; two sockets under each of the boards. And he made bars of acacia wood: five for the

boards on one side of the tabernacle, five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle on the far side westward. And he made the middle bar to pass through the boards from one end to the other. He overlaid the boards with gold, made their rings of gold *to be* holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

5. (35-38) The veil with its four pillars, and the screen with its five pillars (according to the command and description in Exo. 26:31-33, 36-37).

And he made a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen; it was worked *with* an artistic design of cherubim. He made for it four pillars of acacia *wood*, and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of silver for them. He also made a screen for the tabernacle door, of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver, and its five pillars with their hooks.

And he overlaid their capitals and their rings with gold, but their five sockets *were* bronze.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom the LORD had put skill - everyone whose heart stirred him to volunteer to do the work, **3** and they received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to do the work for the service of the sanctuary, and they still continued to bring him a freewill offering each morning. **4** So all the skilled people who were doing all the work on the sanctuary came from the work they were doing **5** and told Moses, "The people are bringing much more than is needed for the completion of the work which the LORD commanded us to do!"

6 Moses instructed them to take his message throughout the camp, saying, "Let no man or woman do any more work for the offering for the sanctuary." So the people were

restrained from bringing any more. **7** Now the materials were more than enough for them to do all the work.

8 All the skilled among those who were doing the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet; they were made with cherubim that were the work of an artistic designer. **9** The length of one curtain was forty-two feet, and the width of one curtain was six feet – the same size for each of the curtains. **10** He joined five of the curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he joined to one another. **11** He made loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in the first set; he did the same along the edge of the end curtain in the second set. **12** He made fifty loops on the first curtain, and he made fifty loops on the end curtain that was in the second set, with the loops opposite one another. **13** He made fifty gold clasps and joined the curtains together to one another with the clasps, so that the tabernacle was a unit.

14 He made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. **15** The length of one curtain was forty-five feet, and the width of one curtain was six feet – one size for all eleven curtains. **16** He joined five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves.

17 He made fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in the first set and fifty loops along the edge of the curtain that joined the second set. **18** He made fifty bronze clasps to join the tent together so that it might be a unit. **19** He made a covering for the tent out of ram skins dyed red and over that a covering of fine leather.

20 He made the frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood as uprights. **21** The length of each frame was fifteen feet, the width of each frame was two and a quarter feet, **22** with two projections per frame parallel one to another.

He made all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. **23**

So he made frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side. **24** He made forty silver bases under the twenty

frames - two bases under the first frame for its two projections, and likewise two bases under the next frame for its two projections, **25** and for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty frames **26**

and their forty silver bases, two bases under the first frame and two bases under the next frame. **27** And for the back of the tabernacle on the west he made six frames. **28**

He made two frames for the corners of the tabernacle on the back. **29** At the two corners they were doubled at the lower end and finished together at the top in one ring. So he did for both. **30** So there were eight frames and their silver bases, sixteen bases, two bases under each frame.

31 He made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle **32** and five bars for the frames on the second side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle for the back side on the west. **33**

He made the middle bar to reach from end to end in the center of the frames. **34** He overlaid the frames with gold and made their rings of gold to provide places for the bars, and he overlaid the bars with gold.

35 He made the special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer. **36** He made for it four posts of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, with gold hooks, and he cast for them four silver bases.

37 He made a hanging for the entrance of the tent of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer, **38** and its five posts and their hooks. He overlaid their tops and their bands with gold, but their five bases were bronze.

1 Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; its length was three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches.

Guzik - Exodus 37:1-29

Exodus 37 - Building the Tabernacle Furniture

A. The furniture of the Most Holy Place.

1. (1-5) The Ark of the Covenant (according the command and description in Exo. 25:10-16).

Then Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *was* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold all around it. And he cast for it four rings of gold *to be set* in its four corners: two rings on one side, and two rings on the other side of it. He made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.

2. (6-9) The mercy seat (the gold lid to the Ark of the Covenant, according to the command and description in Exo. 25:17-22).

He also made the mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *was* its length and a cubit and a half its width. He made two cherubim of beaten gold; he made them of one piece at the two ends of the mercy seat: one cherub at one end on this side, and the other cherub at the *other* end on that side. He made the cherubim at the two ends *of one piece* with the mercy seat. The cherubim spread out *their* wings above, *and* covered the mercy seat with their wings. They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

B. The furniture of the holy place.

1. (10-16) The Table of Showbread with its utensils (according to the command and description in Exo. 25:23-30).

He made the table of acacia wood; two cubits *was* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold all around it. Also he made a frame of a handbreadth all around it, and made a molding of gold for the frame all around it. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *were* at its four

legs. The rings were close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. And he made the poles of acacia wood to bear the table, and overlaid them with gold. He made of pure gold the utensils which were on the table: its dishes, its cups, its bowls, and its pitchers for pouring.

2. (17-24) The gold lampstand (according to the command and description in Exo. 25:31-40).

He also made the lampstand of pure gold; of hammered work he made the lampstand. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and its flowers were of the same piece.

And six branches came out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. There were three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower; and so for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. And on the lampstand itself *were* four bowls made like almond *blossoms*, *each with* its *ornamental* knob and flower. *There was* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches extending from it. Their knobs and their branches were of one piece; all of it *was* one hammered piece of pure gold. And he made its seven lamps, its wick-trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold he made it, with all its utensils.

3. (25-28) The Altar of Incense (according to the command and description in Exo. 30:1-10).

He made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length *was* a cubit and its width a cubit; *it was* square; and two cubits *was* its height. Its horns were *of one piece* with it. And he overlaid it with pure gold: its top, its sides all around, and its horns. He also made for it a molding of gold all around it. He made two rings of gold for it under its molding,

by its two corners on both sides, as holders for the poles with which to bear it. And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

4. (29) The anointing oil and incense (according to the command and description in Exo. 30:22-38).

He also made the holy anointing oil and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the perfumer.

© 2004 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He overlaid it with pure gold, inside and out, and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. **3** He cast four gold rings for it that he put on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. **4** He made poles of acacia wood, overlaid them with gold, **5** and put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark.

6 He made an atonement lid of pure gold; its length was three feet nine inches, and its width was two feet three inches. **7** He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid, **8** one cherub on one end and one cherub on the other end.

He made the cherubim from the atonement lid on its two ends. **9** The cherubim were spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid with their wings. The cherubim faced each other, looking toward the atonement lid.

10 He made the table of acacia wood; its length was three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches. **11** He overlaid it with pure gold, and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. **12** He made a surrounding frame for it about three inches wide, and he made a surrounding border of gold for its frame. **13** He cast four gold rings for it and attached the rings at the four corners where its four legs were. **14** The rings were close to the frame to provide places for the poles to carry the table. **15** He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, to carry the table. **16** He made the vessels which

were on the table out of pure gold, its plates, its ladles, its pitchers, and its bowls, to be used in pouring out offerings.

17 He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered metal; its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its blossoms were from the same piece.

18 Six branches were extending from its sides, three branches of the lampstand from one side of it, and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it. **19**

Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on the first branch, and three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on the next branch, and the same for the six branches that were extending from the lampstand. **20** On the lampstand there were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms, **21** with a bud under the first two branches from it, and a bud under the next two branches from it, and a bud under the third two branches from it; according to the six branches that extended from it. **22** Their buds and their branches were of one piece; all of it was one hammered piece of pure gold. **23** He made its seven lamps, its trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. **24** He made the lampstand and all its accessories with seventy-five pounds of pure gold.

25 He made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length was a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half – a square – and its height was three feet. Its horns were of one piece with it. **26** He overlaid it with pure gold – its top, its four walls, and its horns – and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. **27** He also made two gold rings for it under its border, on its two sides, on opposite sides, as places for poles to carry it with. **28** He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

29 He made the sacred anointing oil and the pure fragrant incense, the work of a perfumer.

1 He made the altar for the burnt offering of acacia wood seven feet six inches long and seven feet six inches wide – it

was square – and its height was four feet six inches.

Guzik - Exodus 38:1-31

Exodus 38 - More on Building the Tabernacle

A. Items associated with the outer court.

1. (1-7) The altar of burnt offering (according to the command and description in Exo. 27:1-8).

He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood; five cubits *was* its length and five cubits its width; *it was* square; and its height *was* three cubits. He made its horns on its four corners; the horns were *of one piece* with it. And he overlaid it with bronze. He made all the utensils for the altar: the pans, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the firepans; all its utensils he made of bronze. And he made a grate of bronze network for the altar, under its rim, midway from the bottom. He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, *as* holders for the poles. And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with bronze. Then he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to bear it. He made the altar hollow with boards.

2. (8) The bronze laver (according to the command and description in Exo. 30:17-21).

He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

a. The metal for the bronze laver came from

the bronze mirrors of the serving women -

a wonderful thing for people to give up the measure of their own appearance for God's cleansing!

3. (9-20) The court with its pillars and linen fence (according to the command and description in Exo. 27:9-19).

Then he made the court on the south side; the

hangings of the court *were of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long. There *were* twenty pillars for them, with twenty bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver.

On the north side *the hangings were* one hundred cubits *long*, with twenty pillars and their twenty bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. And on the west side *there were* hangings of fifty cubits, with ten pillars and their ten sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. For the east side *the hangings were* fifty cubits. The hangings of one side *of the gate were* fifteen cubits *long*, with their three pillars and their three sockets, and the same for the other side of the court gate; on this side and that *were* hangings of fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. All the hangings of the court all around *were of* fine woven linen. The sockets for the pillars *were* bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver, and the overlay of their capitals *was* silver; and all the pillars of the court had bands of silver. The screen for the gate of the court *was* woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and of fine woven linen. The length *was* twenty cubits, and the height along its width *was* five cubits, corresponding to the hangings of the court. And *there were* four pillars *with* their four sockets of bronze; their hooks *were* silver, and the overlay of their capitals and their bands *was* silver. All the pegs of the tabernacle, and of the court all around, *were* bronze.

B. An inventory of the materials for the building of the tabernacle.

1. (21-23) The leaders of the work.

This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which was counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses. And with him *was* Aholiab

the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer, a weaver of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and of fine linen.

a. **By the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron**

the priest: This priest named **Ithmar** oversaw the Levites who had the responsibility of managing all these resources. They had a big job to do and seemed to do it well.

b. **Which was counted according to the commandment of Moses:** The present day value of the materials used in the tabernacle would total more than \$13 million. Their combined weight would be almost 19,000 pounds. This was a significant project to manage.

i. Some wonder where Israel got all these resources out in the middle of the desert. But Exo. 12:36 reminds us that the children of Israel left Egypt with great resources because they had plundered the Egyptians, who willingly gave Israel what amounted to back wages for their years of slavery.

2. (24) The inventory of gold.

All the gold that was used in all the work of the holy *place*, that is, the gold of the offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.

a. **Twenty-nine talents:** Some estimate a talent to equal about 70 pounds (32 kilos). This means there was something like 2,030 pounds (920 kilos) of gold used in the tabernacle.

3. (25-28) The inventory of silver.

And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation *was* one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: a bekah for each man (*that is*, half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for

everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men*. And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them.

4. (29-31) The inventory of bronze.

The offering of bronze *was* seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. And with it he made the sockets for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the bronze altar, the

bronze grating for it, and all the utensils for the altar, the sockets for the court all around, the bases for the court gate, all the pegs for the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the court all around.

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He made its horns on its four corners; its horns were part of it, and he overlaid it with bronze. **3** He made all the utensils of the altar – the pots, the shovels, the tossing bowls, the meat hooks, and the fire pans – he made all its utensils of bronze. **4** He made a grating for the altar, a network of bronze under its ledge, halfway up from the bottom. **5** He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, to provide places for the poles. **6** He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. **7**

He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made the altar hollow, out of boards.

8 He made the large basin of bronze and its pedestal of bronze from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

9 He made the courtyard. For the south side the hangings of the courtyard were of fine twisted linen, one hundred fifty feet long, **10** with their twenty posts and their twenty

bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. **11** For the north side the hangings were one hundred fifty feet, with their twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. **12** For the west side there were hangings seventy-five feet long, with their ten posts and their ten bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. **13** For the east side, toward the sunrise, it was seventy-five feet wide, **14** with hangings on one side of the gate that were twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases, **15** and for the second side of the gate of the courtyard, just like the other, the hangings were twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. **16** All the hangings around the courtyard were of fine twisted linen. **17** The bases for the posts were bronze. The hooks of the posts and their bands were silver, their tops were overlaid with silver, and all the posts of the courtyard had silver bands. **18** The curtain for the gate of the courtyard was of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer. It was thirty feet long, and like the hangings in the courtyard, it was seven and a half feet high, **19** with four posts and their four bronze bases. Their hooks and their bands were silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver. **20** All the tent pegs of the tabernacle and of the courtyard all around were bronze. **21** This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, which was counted by the order of Moses, being the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. **22** Now Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything that the LORD had commanded Moses; **23** and with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an artisan, a designer, and an embroiderer in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine linen. **24** All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary (namely, the gold of the wave offering) was

twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel.

25 The silver of those who were numbered of the community was one hundred talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel, **26** one beka per person, that is, a half shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, for everyone who crossed over to those numbered, from twenty years old or older, 603,550 in all. **27** The one hundred talents of silver were used for casting the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the special curtain – one hundred bases for one hundred talents, one talent per base. **28** From the remaining 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the posts, overlaid their tops, and made bands for them.

29 The bronze of the wave offering was seventy talents and 2,400 shekels. **30** With it he made the bases for the door of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils of the altar, **31** the bases for the courtyard all around, the bases for the gate of the courtyard, all the tent pegs of the tabernacle, and all the tent pegs of the courtyard all around.

1 From the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for serving in the sanctuary; they made holy garments that were for Aaron, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Guzik - Exodus 39:1-43

Exodus 39 - The Priestly Garments

A. Making of the Priestly garments.

1. (1-7) The ephod for the high priest (according to the command and description in Exo. 28:5-14).

Of the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread* they made garments of ministry, for ministering in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and of fine woven linen. And they beat the gold into thin sheets and cut *it into* threads, to work *it in with* the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread* and the fine linen, *into*

artistic designs. They made shoulder straps for it to couple *it* together; it was coupled together at its two edges. And the intricately woven band of his ephod that *was* on it *was* of the same workmanship, *woven of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and of fine woven linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses. And they set onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold; they were engraved, as signets are engraved, with the names of the sons of Israel. He put them on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

2. (8-21) The breastplate for the high priest
(according to the command and description in Exo. 28:15-29).

And he made the breastplate, artistically woven like the workmanship of the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and of fine woven linen. They made the breastplate square by doubling it; a span *was* its length and a span its width when doubled. And they set in it four rows of stones: a row with a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald was the first row; the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 12 the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. *They were* enclosed in settings of gold in their mountings. *There were* twelve stones according to the names of the sons of Israel: according to their names, *engraved like* a signet, each one with its own name according to the twelve tribes. And they made chains for the breastplate at the ends, like braided cords of pure gold. They also made two settings of gold and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And they put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. The two ends of the two braided chains they fastened in the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. And they made two rings of

gold and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which *was* on the inward side of the ephod. They made two *other* gold rings and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. And they bound the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it would be above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate would not come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

3. (22-26) The robe for the high priest (according to the command and description in Exo. 28:31-35).

He made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. And *there was* an opening in the middle of the robe, like the opening in a coat of mail, *with* a woven binding all around the opening, so that it would not tear. They made on the hem of the robe pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, and of fine woven *linen*. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates on the hem of the robe all around between the pomegranates: a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe to minister in, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

4. (27-29) Tunics, turbans, sashes, trousers, for all the priests (according to the command and description in Exo. 28:39-43).

They made tunics, artistically woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, a turban of fine linen, exquisite hats of fine linen, short trousers of fine woven linen, and a sash of fine woven linen with blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, made by a weaver, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

5. (30-31) The turban for the high priest (according to the command and description in Exo. 28:36-38).

Then they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription *like* the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

And they tied to it a blue cord, to fasten *it* above on the turban, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

B. Moses looks over the work.

1. (32-41) An overview of the whole construction project.

Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins, and the veil of the covering; the ark of the Testimony with its poles, and the mercy seat; the table, all its utensils, and the showbread; the pure *gold* lampstand with its lamps (the lamps set in order), all its utensils, and the oil for light; the gold altar, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense; the screen for the tabernacle door; the bronze altar, its grate of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the laver with its base; the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, the screen for the court gate, its cords, and its pegs; all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; and the garments of ministry, to minister in the holy *place*: the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister as priests.

2. (42-43) Moses inspects the work.

According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work.

Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.

a. **Then Moses looked over all the work:** Moses was the leader with the vision from God, with the best knowledge of

the pattern God wanted the tabernacle built according to (Exo.

25:9). Therefore it was right and proper for him to supervise every detail of the construction.

b. As the LORD had commanded, just so

they had done it: This was wonderful obedience. No wonder **Moses blessed them.**

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2 He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen. **3** They hammered the gold into thin sheets and cut it into narrow strips to weave them into the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and into the fine linen, the work of an artistic designer. **4** They made shoulder pieces for it, attached to two of its corners, so it could be joined together. **5** The artistically woven waistband of the ephod that was on it was like it, of one piece with it, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 They set the onyx stones in gold filigree settings, engraved as with the engravings of a seal with the names of the sons of Israel. **7** He put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as stones of memorial for the Israelites, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

8 He made the breastpiece, the work of an artistic designer, in the same fashion as the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twisted linen. **9** It was square – they made the breastpiece doubled, nine inches long and nine inches wide when doubled. **10** They set on it four rows of stones: a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl – the first row; **11** and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; **12** and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; **13** and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in gold filigree settings. **14** The stones were for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, corresponding to the number of their names. Each name corresponding to one of the twelve tribes was like the engravings of a seal.

15 They made for the breastpiece braided chains like cords of pure gold, **16** and they made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and they attached the two rings to the upper two ends of the breastpiece. **17** They attached the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece; **18** the other two ends of the two chains they attached to the two settings, and they attached them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it. **19** They made two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece on its edge, which is on the inner side of the ephod. **20** They made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod. **21** They tied the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it was above the waistband of the ephod, so that the breastpiece would not be loose from the ephod, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 He made the robe of the ephod completely blue, the work of a weaver. **23** There was an opening in the center of the robe, like the opening of a collar, with an edge all around the opening so that it could not be torn. **24** They made pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and twisted linen around the hem of the robe. **25** They made bells of pure gold and attached the bells between the pomegranates around the hem of the robe between the pomegranates. **26** There was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe, to be used in ministering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

27 They made tunics of fine linen – the work of a weaver, for Aaron and for his sons – **28** and the turban of fine linen, the headbands of fine linen, and the undergarments of fine twisted linen. **29** The sash was of fine twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, the work of an embroiderer, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. **30** They made a plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold and wrote on it an

inscription, as on the engravings of a seal, "Holiness to the LORD." **31** They attached to it a blue cord, to attach it to the turban above, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

32 So all the work of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed, and the Israelites did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses – they did it exactly so. **33** They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings, clasps, frames, bars, posts, and bases; **34** and the coverings of ram skins dyed red, the covering of fine leather, and the protecting curtain; **35** the ark of the testimony and its poles, and the atonement lid; **36** the table, all its utensils, and the Bread of the Presence; **37** the pure lampstand, its lamps, with the lamps set in order, and all its accessories, and oil for the light; **38** and the gold altar, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; and the curtain for the entrance to the tent; **39** the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin with its pedestal; **40** the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway of the courtyard, its ropes and its tent pegs, and all the furnishings for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; **41** the woven garments for serving in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister as priests.

42 The Israelites did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses. **43** Moses inspected all the work – and they had done it just as the LORD had commanded – they had done it exactly – and Moses blessed them.

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses:

Guzik - Exodus 40:1-38

Exodus 40 - The Completion of the Tabernacle

A. God tells Moses how to assemble everything.

1. (1-5) How to arrange the furniture within the tabernacle.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of

meeting. You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle."

a. **On the first day of the first month:** This indicates that it was a year since Israel came out of Egypt. This was an amazing year in the history of Israel. They could count the great works of God and measure their own spiritual growth.

i. It is fair to use the passing of time to see how far we have come with God. Some Christians never grow much beyond their initial experience with God. Some who have been Christians for 10 years have only the maturity of a one-year-old Christian - they simply repeat their first year over and over again.

b. **You shall put in it the ark of the**

Testimony: The tabernacle had to be *built* according to pattern and *assembled* according to pattern.

2. (6-11) How to arrange the items in the courtyard.

"Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate. And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy.

You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most

holy. And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it.

3. (12-16) Anointing Aaron and his sons to minister as priests.

"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

a. Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did:

The full description of this dedication ceremony for the priests is found in Leviticus 8 and 9.

B. Moses oversees the assembly of the tabernacle.

1. (17-19) The tent of meeting goes up by setting up the boards, covering with the curtains.

And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was raised up. So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars.

And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

2. (20-21) The Ark of the Covenant is set in the Most Holy Place, and the veil is set in place.

He took the Testimony and put *it* into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned

off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

3. (22-23) The table of showbread is put in the Holy Place.

He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

4. (24-25) The lampstand is put in Holy Place.

He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

5. (26-27) The golden altar of incense is put in the Holy Place.

He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6. (28) The screen is hung at the entrance of the tabernacle. He hung up the screen *at* the door of the tabernacle.

7. (29) The brazen altar is put in its place.

And he put the altar of burnt offering *before* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

8. (30-32) The laver for washing is put in between the altar and the tent.

He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it. Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

9. (33) The outer court is set up.

And he raised up the court all around the

tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

a. **So Moses finished the work:** When the tabernacle was finally assembled, it was an earthly model of a heavenly reality. Since Moses was instructed to build and arrange everything according to pattern, it isn't surprising that we see elements of this tabernacle arrangement in the Bible's descriptions of heaven.

- In Rev. 4:1-6, the Ark of the Covenant (representing the throne of God), the lampstand, and the laver all correspond to a heavenly reality.

- In Rev. 8:2-4, the altar of incense in heaven is mentioned.

- In Isa. 6:1-7, the tabernacle structure is implied by the mention of the temple, and the brazen altar is described.

- In Heb. 9:23-24, it tells us that at some point in time (after the cross), Jesus entered the heavenly reality represented on earth by the tabernacle, and appeared in the presence of God to offer a perfect atonement for our sins. Therefore, every time before this event, when the High Priest made atonement in the earthly tabernacle, it was "play acting" - and looking forward to - the perfect atonement the Son of God would offer.

C. The glory of God and the tabernacle.

1. (34-35) God's glory fills the tabernacle.

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

a. The cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle:

Obviously, God was pleased with the obedience of Israel. This was not so much because it showed His superiority over them, but it was more so because it proved they really did believe Him and love Him.

b. Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud

rested above it: The same thing happened when Solomon completed and dedicated the temple - the glory of God so filled the temple they couldn't stay in it (1Ki. 8:10-11).

2. (36-38) God's glory abides with Israel in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

a. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward:

This is beautiful evidence that God did answer Moses' prayer in Exo. 33:14. God's presence was with Israel, despite the golden calf debacle.

b. Throughout all their journeys: The Book of Exodus ends with great hope and trust in God. Though Israel was in the middle of a

desolate desert, had fierce enemies in the Promised Land, and were weak and liable to sin and rebellion, God was with them. This gave them great cause for faith and confidence.

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2 “On the first day of the first month you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. **3** You are to place the ark of the testimony in it and shield the ark with the special curtain. **4** You are to bring in the table and set out the things that belong on it; then you are to bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. **5** You are to put the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. **6** You are to put the altar for the burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. **7** You are to put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it. **8** You are to set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard.

9 And take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and sanctify it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. **10** Then you are to anoint the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils; you are to sanctify the altar, and it will be the most holy altar. **11** You must also anoint the large basin and its pedestal, and you are to sanctify it.

12 “You are to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. **13** Then you are to clothe Aaron with the holy garments and anoint him and sanctify him so that he may minister as my priest.

14 You are to bring his sons and clothe them with tunics **15** and anoint them just as you anointed their father, so that they may minister as my priests; their anointing will make them a priesthood that will continue throughout their generations.” **16** This is what Moses did, according to all the LORD had commanded him – so he did.

17 So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month, in the second year. **18** When Moses set up the tabernacle and put its bases in place, he set up its frames, attached its bars, and set up its posts. **19** Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. **20** He took the

testimony and put it in the ark, attached the poles to the ark, and then put the atonement lid on the ark. **21**

And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung the protecting curtain, and shielded the ark of the testimony from view, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the curtain. **23** And he set the bread in order on it before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

24 And he put the lampstand in the tent of meeting opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle. **25** Then he set up the lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

26 And he put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the curtain, **27** and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

28 Then he put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. **29** He also put the altar for the burnt offering by the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 Then he put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing. **31**

Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and their feet from it. **32** Whenever they entered the tent of meeting, and whenever they approached the altar, they would wash, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

33 And he set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and the altar, and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the work.

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. **35** Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. **36**

But when the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on all their journeys; **37** but if the

cloud was not lifted up, then they would not journey further until the day it was lifted up. **38** For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, but fire would be on it at night, in plain view of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.